

INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOP VESEY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103535

Headteacher: Mrs M E Clarke

Reporting inspector: Mr C Sander
4151

Dates of inspection: 24 - 28 September 2001

Inspection number: 197285

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar (selective)
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 11 to 18
Gender of pupils: 11-16 Boys only
16-18 Male and Female

School address: Lichfield Road
Sutton Coldfield
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr P G Randon

Date of previous inspection: 30 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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4151	Cedric Sander	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils or students taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
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22723	Bob Hartman	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3958	Maureen Cawdron	Team inspector	English	
20243	David Benstock	Team inspector	<p>Sixth Form Co-ordinator</p> <p>Science</p>	
10941	Renee Robinson	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Business studies</p>	
15606	Christine Hill	Team inspector	Art and design	

20716	Arthur Grogan	Team inspector	History	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
23550	Marie Blewitt	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
30128	Shirley Stanley	Team inspector	Music Religious education	
14573	Hugh Wareing	Team inspector	Geography	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bishop Vesey's Grammar School is situated in Sutton Coldfield on the north-eastern edge of Birmingham but the boys, and some of the female students in the sixth form, come from a much wider geographical area, reflecting the social and cultural diversity of the West Midlands. Founded in 1527 and possessing an impressive history, it is an 11-18 voluntary aided grammar school for boys. It is broadly average in size with 881 pupils and students on roll, of whom 267 are in the sixth form. It has maintained a similar size since the last inspection. Nearly one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, much higher than the national average, but nearly all do so fluently. Standards on entry are well above average and particularly high in mathematics, but there are fewer very able boys than is usual for grammar schools. Less than 2 per cent of pupils have identified special educational needs. Five per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion below the national average. Ninety-eight per cent continue in education beyond the age of 16; nearly all at this school. The school is a member of the northern network within Birmingham's Excellence in Cities initiative and currently holds the Sportsmark Gold Award

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This successful school provides a good quality of education by effectively including all pupils and students who meet its entrance requirements. National test and public examination results in 2000 were above average for all schools. They are in-line with the national average for grammar schools at age 14 but well below at age 16 years. Progress is good by age 14 and very good overall. Standards are above expectations in many subjects because high expectations are the hallmark of the teaching. The school is well led and fulfils its aims very successfully. The unit costs are above average. The gains in personal development are very good. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high at age 16 in mathematics, art, English and history.
- The quality of learning is very good and particularly so in Years 10 and 11, because the very good teaching emphasises high expectations.
- It fulfils its aims very well indeed by making very good provision for personal development.
- The very good partnership between the headteacher and the governing body defines very well the long-term future of the school.
- The quality and range of its extra-curricular provision are excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards and the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology.
- The evaluation of major decisions within the school development plan.
- Curriculum and teaching methods in Year 8 to provide more challenge.
- The planned provision to meet fully the statutory requirements for information and communication technology in all the subjects of the National Curriculum.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996. Improvement since then has been good. The quality of teaching and learning is much improved: the proportion of very good teaching is much greater, the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching and learning much reduced. The overall quality is more consistent. Most of the subjects that needed to improve have done so very successfully. The average points score in the GCSE examinations is four points higher than in 1996, within a trend broadly in-line with that nationally. There has been good improvement in GCE results in the sixth form. Resources for information and communication technology [ICT] have improved but the impact on the quality of teaching and learning remains too patchy. Improvement has been slower in some aspects of development planning. The legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all the pupils and students is still not fully met.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 11 and sixth form students at the end of Year 13, based on average point scores in GCSE and A level/AS level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	E
A levels/AS levels	A	A*	A	

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

**Results are in the top 5 per cent nationally.*

Caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of the grade for GCSE examinations in similar schools. This comparison is based on all grammar schools nationally. The range of attainment on entry is much broader at this school than in grammar schools nationally.

Test results in English, mathematics and science at the age of 14 in 2000 were in the top 5 per cent nationally and broadly in-line with similar schools. Those in mathematics have been consistently high. The trend in national test results has been below the national trend but standards in English and mathematics at age 14 have shown steady improvement. Many exceed their challenging targets based on their standards on entry to the school. Statutory teacher assessments at age 14 are well above average in all subjects. Standards are well above those expected nationally in mathematics, science and art. They are above expectations in all other subjects except design and technology where they are in-line with expected standards nationally. Progress and achievement are good at age 14 in all subjects other than design and technology.

GCSE results for the three years since 1998 have been in the top 5 per cent of all schools nationally. The trend has been broadly in-line with that nationally. Standards at age 16 are well above those expected nationally in English, mathematics, art, geography and history. They are above in all other subjects except design and technology where standards are below those expected nationally. Achievement and progress are very good at age 16 years. The school has met its targets.

GCE results in the sixth form have improved significantly over the last 3 years. In 2000 the average points score per student was well above the national average. Standards are well above those usually seen in sixth forms in mathematics, geography, art and business studies. They are above in all other subjects except design and technology where standards are below those usually found.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils and students take full advantage of the many opportunities provided for their personal development.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Nearly all are polite and courteous, helping to create a very orderly community. Occasionally, the behaviour of a small minority in Year 8 is unsatisfactory and can spoil a small number of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are cordial and purposeful, frequently contributing to very good learning in lessons. There is a lively readiness to participate fully in team games and contribute to a wide range of activities.
Attendance	Very good. Above the national average for grammar schools and high compared to all schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in the main school and in the sixth form because expectations are high and nearly all respond very well to the frequently challenging work. The school meets well the needs of all pupils and students, including those with special educational needs and makes satisfactory provision for those who use English as an additional language. When teaching is very good, expert subject knowledge is skilfully explained using very well chosen teaching methods. Learning is very well managed because pupils and students are frequently provided with a variety of well-matched and challenging tasks. This results in very good gains in skills and understanding. They learn very well and particularly after age 14 because nearly all concentrate very well and are not afraid of hard work. The learning would be even better if, between the ages of 11 and 14 they were made more aware of the standards described in the National Curriculum. Students learn very well in the sixth form because their greater maturity enables them to work well on their own. They benefit greatly from the high level of subject expertise provided.

The quality of teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good in English and science and very good in mathematics. In Years 10 and 11 it is very good in English and mathematics and good in science. In English, geography, history and modern foreign languages the quality of teaching and learning is better in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years because assessment is better used to inform planning. As a result work is generally well matched to individual needs. The teaching of numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory but there is no planned provision.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. Very good in Years 10 and 11. Excellent extra-curricular activities; not enough time for ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The small number of boys with identified special educational needs is fully included and their needs are well met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. A good level of support is provided from the school's basic budget as no additional funding is received to meet the needs of these boys. Assessment procedures on entry to the school are unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Special features, such as a games afternoon for all pupils and students, contribute very well to meeting the school's aims for personal development. Provision for moral and social development is very good. It is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for pupils' and students' welfare, monitoring attendance and individual progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is a firm commitment to raising standards, a sensitive respect for traditional values and a skilful pacing of change within an increasing readiness to embrace new initiatives.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. A long-standing commitment to the aims and values of the school, a high level of expertise and excellent understanding of their strategic role are major strengths. Some statutory requirements for the curriculum are not fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Monitoring and review procedures are very good but the intended impact of planned actions on standards and the quality of learning is not defined.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Procedures to allocate funding according to planned priorities are good but their identification within planning documents is unsatisfactory. The principles of best value are generally well applied. The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of pupils and students in school. • The quality of teaching. • The high expectations that the school has. • The school helps their children to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about progress and events in the school. • The misbehaviour of a small minority of boys in lessons. • The levels of homework.

Fifty parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 514 questionnaires were returned. The inspection findings accord with what pleases parents most.

On those issues raised by parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting, there was evidence of some very occasional misbehaviour in lessons, mainly in Year 8, linked to the degree of challenge provided by the curriculum. There are good arrangements to communicate with parents on a regular basis. All pupils in the main school and students in the sixth form have an annual report and also receive interim reports during the year. Newsletters, written by students in the sixth form, are sent out occasionally and the school regularly sends many letters to parents to keep them informed of events. Arrangements for homework are generally good but there are some inconsistencies in practice.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is larger than others nationally. With 267 students, it comprises nearly one-third of the school. Approximately one-fifth of students are female and join the school at age 16 years. There is a significant proportion of students who have English as an additional language, nearly all of whom do so very fluently. The school contributes to a consortium of local schools to provide some subjects. It has good links with the college of further education. Most students study at least three A levels and all complete a general studies course that includes key skills.

HOW GOOD THE SIXTH FORM IS

The sixth form is successful. It achieves very good examination results overall. Students learn very well and make good progress. The emphasis in the curriculum is on courses that lead to traditional GCE A level qualifications. However, the general studies programme provides a wide enhancement of the curriculum and opportunities to ensure good, personal development. The quality of teaching is very good. It is very good in mathematics, English, art, music, modern languages, physical education and business studies. Teaching is unsatisfactory in design and technology and good in all other subjects.

Strengths

- Students achieve very good AS and A level results and do particularly well in mathematics, business studies, art and English literature.
- Provision for general studies.
- Programme for key skills that provides support, induction to the sixth form and develops relationships.
- Provision for art, English literature and mathematics.
- Good assessment procedures to monitor and support individuals' academic progress.
- Very good extra-curricular opportunities, including sport.

What could be improved

- Planning how to develop ICT skills in each subject.
- Arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements for religious education.
- Accommodation.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. Strengths and areas for improvement in individual subjects are identified in the sections on individual subjects in the full report.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN INDIVIDUAL CURRICULUM AREAS

The table below shows overall judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses that were inspected in the sixth form. Judgements are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Overall judgement about provision, with comment
Mathematics	Very good. Results and standards are well above average because very good subject knowledge and very good relationships contribute much to the very good teaching. The commitment to high standards is well managed. As a result students make very good progress.
Physics	Good. Results have improved over the last year. Students achieve well because practical work is well taught by specialists. Insufficient use is made of ICT.
Business Education	Good. A level results were above national average in 2000 and improved further in 2001. Teaching is very good because it matches students' individual needs. Computers are sometimes unavailable when the students want to use them.
ICT	Good. A level results are high. Good teaching enables the most able students to organise their own work and provides a good level of individual help in lessons.
Physical Education	Very good. Students make very good progress. Standards are well ahead of those expected nationally. The quality of teaching is very good. There are excellent relationships in class.
Art	Very good. A level results are high because assessment, marking and opportunities for the students to make their own decisions are strong features of the very good teaching. The leadership and management of art are excellent.
Music	Very good. A level results have improved from last year. There is a high standard of playing and performing, but composition skills are lower than expected nationally.
Latin	Good. Results were above average in 2000, building on good GCSE performance. Students are achieving well as a result of good teaching.
Geography	Good. A level results are above average overall and improved further in 2001. Teaching is good because it motivates students well to make good progress. The provision of specialist rooms is unsatisfactory.
History	Good. Students performed well in AS in 2001 and there is a high level of analytical skills demonstrated in students' evaluation of historical evidence. The subject is well managed and teaching encourages a high level of student participation.
English Literature	Very good. A level results are consistently well above average. Achievement is very good because students develop a perceptive insight into literary texts. Teaching is good overall. Sometimes the match of work to the full range of students' capabilities is unsatisfactory. In all other respects the subject is well managed.
French	Good. Results are above average but only a few students gain the highest grades. The students are well taught because expectations are high and the range of methods good.
German	Satisfactory. Results are above average but only a few students gain the highest grades because they are insufficiently challenged. Other students are well supported and arrangements for homework are good.

In other subjects work was sampled. Provision was mainly good, but unsatisfactory in design and technology. Teaching was good in religious education, although there is insufficient allocation of time to deliver the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Good provision is made in chemistry, biology and geology where students achieve well and gain above average A level results.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Aspect	Comment
How well students are guided and supported	Good. Individuals are well provided with good information, guidance and careers advice. Provision for the development of key skills is good. Procedures for monitoring standards and progress are very good. Test data is used well to set targets.
Effectiveness of the leadership and management of the sixth form	Good. Planning is effective and efficient because provision is well monitored. Governors are fully informed and alert to needs. Assessment data is used well to evaluate individual performance.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

What students like about the sixth form	What they feel could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses suit their aspirations and talents. • Teachers are accessible for help. • They are well taught, and expect to be successful. • They are helped to study independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of advice about future options. • How the school responds to their views.

Students are positive about the sixth form and many of the concerns expressed at the early stage of the term are resolved in meetings held in the first weeks of term. Approximately one-half of the students who completed the questionnaire had only just started their sixth form education. As a result they had very little experience upon which to base a view about how well they are informed about their progress or helped with personal problems. Strengths identified by the students are much in evidence. Careers advice is readily given to students and the school responds very well to their personal or academic concerns. Assessment is well used to set targets and students are interviewed regularly to review progress.

COMPARING PROVISION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Inspectors make judgements about provision in subjects and courses and about leadership and management, in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- *The word 'results' refers to how well the pupils and students are doing in national tests, GCSE and GCE examinations.*
 - *The word 'standards' is used to define how well the pupils and students are doing when their work is compared with what pupils and students nationally are expected to know, understand and do at the ages of 11, 14, 16 and 18 years.*
 - *The word 'Level' refers to a particular standard of work described in the National Curriculum.*
 - *The word 'grade' refers to the public examination grading systems for GCSE and GCE.*
 - *The word 'achievement' refers to how well the pupils are doing at the age of 14 compared with what they were able to do at the age of 11, similarly at the age of 16 compared with what they could do at the age of 14 and finally what they can do at the age of 18 compared with what they were able to do at the age of 16 years. It indicates how much progress the pupils and students are making.*
 - *At the time of the inspection the national average scores in national tests and public examinations had not been validated for 2001. Comparisons with national averages are, therefore, applied only to the results in 2000.*
1. At the time of this inspection, Year 7 boys had just started the new school year. Those in Year 10 and students in Year 13 had started their new timetable after Whitsun in the last school year.
 2. In the sixth form, Year 12 students, including some females who had joined the school after the age of 16, had just started their AS level courses. Those in Year 13 had just started their A2 courses.

Results and standards on entry to the school at the age of 11 years.

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results at the age of 11 in national tests taken prior to the boys' entry to the school are well above the national average.• Results at the age of 11 are lower than those one would expect to find for entry to a selective grammar school. |
|--|
3. Results in the national tests taken at age 11 in the final term of primary school are well above the national average for all schools. In 2000, 89 per cent exceeded the standard that all pupils nationally are expected to reach; 79 per cent did so in mathematics and 75 per cent in English. Nearly all exceeded the national expectation in reading at the age of 11 but fewer than half exceeded the national expectation in writing.
 4. Entry to the school at age 11 is by selection, using a citywide test. Many are accepted on the basis of test scores that are lower than those found in other grammar schools in Birmingham. There are fewer who obtain the very high scores in this test.
 5. The best results in the entrance test are in mathematics and the lowest scores are in English. Verbal skills and non-verbal test scores are both lower than their mathematical scores.

6. The results of commercial tests, taken shortly after entry to the school, are well above average.

Results, standards and achievement at the age of 14 years.

Strengths

- Results are well above the national average and broadly in-line with those in grammar schools nationally.
- Achievement is good. It is very good in art.
- Standards of work are above those expected nationally.
- Standards are high at the age of 14 in mathematics, science and art.
- Most of the subjects that needed to improve standards at the time of the last inspection have done so significantly.

Areas for improvement

- Achievement in design and technology.
- The trend in national test results at the age of 14 compared with the national trend.
- The test results of the most able in science.
- The difference between the school's test results in science and those of grammar schools nationally.

7. Results in the Year 2000 national tests in English, mathematics and science were very high compared with all schools nationally. Overall, they were broadly in-line with the average for similar schools. When the results are compared with those in other grammar schools nationally they are very high in mathematics, broadly average in English but below average in science. The most able did well in English and mathematics where their results in 2000 were above average for other grammar schools, but less well in science where the results were well below average.
8. In the 2001 national tests, the results of the more able improved significantly in science but the results of the most able boys in English dropped. Results in mathematics were broadly similar to the well above average profile of previous years with a slight decline in the results of the most able. Based on the figures available for the last five years, the overall trend in the average points score in the national tests taken at the age of 14 have been below the national average.
9. The results in 2001 represent a good degree of achievement. The governors set a challenging target of improvement by two National Curriculum levels by age 14 years. The expected rate of improvement nationally is less than this. Overall, the rate of improvement in 2001 by the age of 14 was 1.84 grades, ahead of the national expectation of 1.5 Levels. Fifty-three per cent exceeded their overall targets with a further 5 per cent meeting them.
10. The 2001 results in the national test in English indicate satisfactory progress by the age of 14 years. The small minority of less able, whose results had been below the nationally expected Level when they joined the school, achieved results above the Level expected at the age of 14, representing a very good level of progress.

11. In mathematics, the 2001 results show very good progress overall, exceeding the governors' challenging targets. Nearly one-quarter of those whose results had been broadly average at the age of 11 obtained Level 8 at the age of 14, indicating very good progress.
12. The results in science in 2001 also indicate good progress overall. Those who had achieved the nationally expected standard at the age of 11 made very good progress with more than a third of them improving their standard by three Levels in three years. The most able were not entered for the test that would have enabled them to obtain Level 8.
13. There are no benchmark assessments at the age of 11 in other subjects and no available comparisons with other grammar schools nationally. The statutory teacher assessments in 2000 were well above average with nearly all achieving the nationally expected standard or better by the age of 14 years.
14. These assessments were particularly high in ICT] physical education, history and modern foreign languages. The most able did particularly well in ICT, geography, history and modern foreign languages. The results indicate unsatisfactory progress by the most able in design and technology.
15. Caution is required in the interpretation of these assessments because moderation arrangements are insufficient to confirm their validity and in art, external guidance led to too severe an assessment of the standards reached by the most able boys.
16. Standards at age 14 are above those expected nationally. Overall, they are slightly below those indicated in the most recent national test results and statutory assessments. Standards are high in mathematics, science and art. The strongest feature of work in mathematics is the firm grasp of algebra and confidence with number. Standards are above those expected nationally in English, ICT, geography, history, music, religious education, modern foreign languages, Latin and business studies. Standards in design and technology are broadly in-line with those expected nationally but achievements are not high enough because many do not use the good drawing skills they develop in art and their evaluation skills are not as good as those expected nationally at age 14 years.
17. Nearly all make good progress by age 14, confirming the analysis of national test results. In almost three-quarters of the lessons or part-lessons seen during the inspection progress was good or better. It was very good in almost a third of lessons and less than satisfactory in three lessons. Compared with other year groups, progress in lessons was slower in Year 8, sometimes as a result of the very occasional misbehaviour of a small minority.
18. Nearly all achieve well in English, mathematics and science. In English, they respond very well to the carefully planned teaching and many produce excellent research projects. In mathematics they develop good algebraic skills and think mathematically with increasing speed and accuracy. In science they are well taught to develop a high level of scientific enquiry by the age of 14 years.
19. Progress is very good and the level of achievement high in art because drawing skills are very well taught and work is developed confidently in a range of media. They are very good in geography because nearly all can describe and explain geographical processes in detail whilst the more able understand well the links between physical and human processes. Progress and achievement are good in ICT, history, music, religious education, modern foreign languages, Latin and business studies. Progress is unsatisfactory in design and technology, resulting in underachievement at the age of

14, because many are insufficiently challenged to apply their knowledge and skills and only the most able show good skills of analysis in their design work.

20. The small number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress by age 14 years. Their achievement is very good in art, satisfactory in English and Latin but unsatisfactory in design and technology. They achieve well at age 14 in all other subjects.
21. The school has started to identify formally those who are gifted and talented. Their progress is not monitored formally but the standards of their work indicate that it is good. It is very good in art, satisfactory in science and unsatisfactory in design and technology. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate progress in modern foreign languages.
22. There was insufficient evidence overall to evaluate the progress over time made by those who have English as an additional language because the school does not undertake such analysis currently. However, in lessons seen during the inspection they were included well in lessons, making progress comparable with others in the group. Their progress and inclusion in lessons was very good in art and good in religious education and physical education because their needs were known and well supported.

Results, standards and progress at the age of 16 years.

Strengths

- A very high GCSE average points score in 2000 compared with all schools nationally.
- GCSE results in 2001 significantly exceeding expectations when compared with their previous results at the age of 14 years.
- Very good achievement in GCSE English literature and good achievement in GCSE history, mathematics, music and the three separate sciences.
- Very good achievement with nearly all making very good progress.
- Standards of work that are well above those expected nationally.
- Standards are very much improved in art and history since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion of boys obtaining grades A*/A.
- Standards and achievement in design and technology.
- The use of ICT in all subjects.

23. Standards are well above those expected nationally. They are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection. There have been some significant improvements in previously underperforming subjects, particularly art and history. They are now high in these subjects because the teaching is greatly improved. Standards remain below those expected nationally in design and technology and the progress of nearly all is unsatisfactory in this subject.
24. The trend since the last inspection in the school's average GCSE points score for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has remained broadly in-line with the national trend. Since the last inspection the strongest performing subjects have been mathematics, English, history and geography. Results in many other subjects have fluctuated. Overall, the school's results are not as far ahead of the national average for all schools as they were five years ago.
25. In 2000, 91 per cent obtained 5+ GCSE grades in the range A*-C, a proportion well above the national average. The average points score of 57.6, was very high.

26. These results, expressed as an average points score per boy, were well below average when compared with grammar schools nationally and were also well below what might reasonably have been expected when comparisons are made with the boys' previous results in national tests at the age of 14 years. However, the proportion obtaining 5+ grades in the range A*-G was above the average for similar schools. The proportion obtaining 1+ grades in the range A*-G was broadly in-line with the average for similar schools. These results represent a satisfactory level of inclusion. The work seen during the inspection indicated that those in Year 11 have made very good progress since the age of 14 and are producing work of a higher standard than these results would indicate. The comparison with similar schools should be treated with caution because when results are high at age 14 there is only a narrow band for further improvement thereafter.
27. The proportion obtaining GCSE grades in the range A*-C in 2000 was above the national average for selective schools in German and broadly in-line with it in mathematics, English and geography.
28. Results were below the selective schools' average nationally in all other subjects and well below in music and French. These results reflect the broader range of attainment on entry than is usually found in selective schools.
29. Results in 2000 were well above the national average in mathematics, English, geography, German, English literature, history, art, French and design and technology. They were below average in music, chemistry and physics.
30. The proportion obtaining grades A*/A was well below the average for selective schools. Nationally, approximately half of those in selective schools obtain grades A*/A in all subjects except business studies. At this school, approximately a third did so in mathematics, English and geography and one-quarter in design and technology, English literature and chemistry; approximately one-fifth did so in physics and just below that proportion in German and biology. The proportion obtaining grades A*/A was very low in French and economics.
31. An analysis undertaken prior to the inspection and based on the challenging targets set at age 14, shows that many made good progress by the age of 16, including the most able. Their results well exceeded those expected in English literature where more than half obtained grades A*/A. In history and mathematics the results significantly exceeded expectations with approximately one-third obtaining grades A*/A. Results also significantly exceeded expectations in each of the three sciences with just over one quarter obtaining grades A*/A. Approximately one-half of the small number studying music at GCSE obtained grades A*A, a proportion well above the national average.
32. Boys did significantly better in English, English literature, geography, history, German, mathematics and design and technology than they did in their other subjects. They did less well in music and physics than in their other subjects.
33. Standards in the work seen during the inspection are well above those expected nationally. They are higher than those indicated by the 2001 and 2000 GCSE examination results. The standard of work in geography is much higher. Standards are well above expectations in English, mathematics art, geography and history and above the standard expected nationally in science, ICT, music, religious education, modern foreign languages, Latin and business studies. They are below the nationally expected standard in design and technology.

34. Nearly all make very good progress by the age of 16 years. Progress was never less than satisfactory in all but one of the 49 lessons seen during this inspection in Years 10 and 11. Those of differing capabilities made good or better progress in 82 per cent of the lessons seen and very good progress in 37 per cent of them. Nearly all made very good progress in English, art, history mathematics and religious education. They made good progress in modern foreign languages, geography, ICT, music, Latin and business studies. Progress was unsatisfactory in design and technology because a lack of challenge in the work sometimes resulted in a loss of motivation.
35. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate the results and progress made by those who have English as an additional language. There was no evidence in the 49 lessons seen in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection that the progress and standards achieved were impeded by a lack of knowledge, skill or understanding in their additional language.
36. Standards of literacy are generally high at age 16.
37. Standards of speaking and listening have improved since the last inspection, although only a few subjects offer a wide range of opportunities for developing these skills fully and there are some missed opportunities, for example, in science. As a consequence, some find it difficult to give cogent scientific explanations and clear descriptions. There are, however, many subjects where discussion and debate are encouraged. This contributes to the well above average standards in history, religious education and English.
38. Many read aloud with expression and clarity, notably in religious education, where oral activities are an important factor. The excellent library plays an important role in promoting reading both for pleasure and research.
39. Most have good writing skills, although there are still weaknesses, as noted at the last inspection. Subjects such as history, geography and English offer good opportunities for writing at length.
40. Standards in numeracy are very good. This is because very good teaching in mathematics promotes a high level of confidence and skill so that nearly all develop a very good mathematical understanding by age 16 years. This is consolidated well in several subjects, including physical education where nearly all at the age of 16 measure distances and record and interpret results accurately and confidently. Standards are well above those expected at age 16 in the drawing of graphs and interpretation of statistics. This contributes to standards that well exceed those expected at the age of 16 in geography.
41. Standards in ICT are above those expected nationally at age 16. The opportunities to use these skills in other subjects to improve the quality of learning and raise standards are unsatisfactory because provision is not planned. ICT is very well used in art to aid research, gather information and manipulate imported images, whereas in the adjacent design and technology facilities it is rarely used.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- A level results well above the national average in 2000.
- A consistently rising trend in A level results since the last inspection.
- Nearly all achieve well because their key skills are good.
- Very good AS results in 2001 in all three separate sciences.

Areas for improvement

- Expectations and the use of key skills in design and technology.

42. A level results in 2000 for both male and female students were well above the national average. Male students, who form the large majority, achieved a slightly higher points score than the female students.
43. Results were well above average in English literature, mathematics, general studies and design and technology. They were above average in biology, chemistry, physics and religious education. Results were well below average in French and geography. They were in-line with the national average in art and design and history. Results in AS mathematics in 2000 were broadly in-line with the national average.
44. Since the last inspection, results have shown a consistent and upward trend. Over the three year period prior to this inspection, mathematics, English literature, economics, Latin and general studies have shown significant 'added value', indicating a good level of achievement. Overall, the strongest performances have been in mathematics, English literature and biology.
45. Validated national data for national comparisons are not yet available for 2001. Results were highest in English, geography, art, business studies, economics, law, Latin and music. They were lowest in biology, French, geology and politics. When students' A level results are compared with their GCSE results obtained two years previously, achievement is highest in business studies, art, economics, English, geography, Latin, law and music. It is lower in biology, chemistry, physics, German, geology, history and politics.
46. A good understanding of the new examination requirements was an important factor contributing to the good AS results in 2001. They were very good in physics, chemistry, biology, art, economics, geography, general studies and ICT. Results were lowest in French, law, psychology and music. They were broadly satisfactory in all other subjects.
47. When these results are compared with the GCSE results twelve months previously, they show that both male and female students made excellent progress in general studies, physics, biology and chemistry. They achieved very good progress in business studies, design and technology and economics. Good progress was evident in their results in computing and geology. The results indicated satisfactory progress in all other subjects except French where it was well below expectations and in physical education, law, music and psychology where it was below expectations.
48. The factors that contribute to these good results are complex but of particular significance. They are the very thorough, professional development to prepare for teaching the new courses and the well-managed procedures for target setting that presents a good level of challenge and provides a good level of individual support and guidance. Standards in numeracy and literacy on entry to the sixth form are good. Many demonstrate a generally very good level of maturity and motivation in their readiness to persevere in their studies. The combination of this good level of key

skills and the high expectations and very good subject knowledge that characterises nearly all their teaching provides the foundation of their overall good progress in the sixth form.

49. Standards in the work seen in Year 13 were above those expected nationally and broadly reflected the most recent examination results. They were higher than the most recent examination results in modern foreign languages and physical education. Overall standards in the lessons or part lessons seen were above those expected nationally in 66 per cent, the standards of which in 19 per cent were very high.
50. Standards are highest in history, physical education, modern foreign languages and mathematics. They are well above those expected nationally in mathematics where the students work with increasing abstraction and in art where the key skills of independent decision making combine very well with a very good appreciation of different media. Very good thinking skills contribute to standards well above those expected nationally in geography where many of the most competent students can compare and contrast patterns and select and use evidence to support or disprove hypotheses. Similar skills, practised at a good level in lessons, contribute to standards well above those expected nationally in business studies.
51. Good analytical skills contribute significantly to standards that are above those expected nationally in history. Good standards in ICT stem from a level of competence in the application of skills to solve problems that is above the standard usually found in sixth forms. Standards are good in English because many demonstrate, both in lessons and in their previously completed work, the confidence and skill to develop an independent point of view and make penetrating insights into texts. The pace with which they acquire a very good level of factual knowledge enables them to achieve standards above those usually found in the three separate sciences. Standards are above expectations in religious education because nearly all co-operate well with each other in lessons, comparing their different interpretations before determining a personal point of view.
52. Standards were below national expectations in design and technology and much lower than the recent examination results because many of the current students do not have sufficient knowledge of materials and product design to support innovation when thinking about possible designs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths

- Very good behaviour and attitudes overall in lessons and around the school.
- Very good involvement in the opportunities provided for their personal development.
- A very good level of self-discipline by the age of 16 years.
- Attendance is above the national average for grammar schools.
- The rate of exclusions is very low.

Areas for improvement

- Attitudes and behaviour of a very small minority in a small number of lessons in Year 8.

53. The behaviour and attitudes to learning of nearly all are very good. Relationships are very good and a high proportion take full advantage of the many planned opportunities for personal development. Attendance is higher than the average for grammar schools. All statutory requirements are met. Unauthorised absences are below the national average. Exclusions are rare and well below the national average. These findings, similar to those of the last inspection in 1996, are a strength of the school.
54. The boys really enjoy coming to school. They take full advantage of the numerous activities and opportunities available to them. The range of opportunities outside lessons is very wide and sports include rugby and cricket, as might be expected in a boys' grammar school, but also a good range of minority sports, including table tennis and basketball. There is a good level of participation in musical activities and some also take the opportunity to develop thinking skills by playing bridge. They contribute very well to the fulfilment of the school's aims with their high levels of participation in all these activities.
55. The boys socialise very well. They are polite and courteous. They were very respectful to inspectors during the inspection, speaking readily to them and opening doors for them. The school provides access to the extensive school grounds during break-times and lunch-times. Although the quality of supervision is good, they are left on trust to a large extent and become responsible for managing their own behaviour. They respond very well and at all times were well behaved during the inspection.
56. Behaviour in lessons is very good. This was a strong feature in art, music and science. Attitudes were good or better in 88 per cent of the 108 lessons observed in the main school, of which 47 per cent were very good. They apply themselves diligently and maintain their concentration for long periods of time, which is very commendable for the younger ones in a 75-minute lesson. They participate very well in lessons, are well motivated and committed to learning. This enables them to make good and often very good progress. These positive attitudes were very strong in Year 7 where they were very good or better in approximately three-quarters of the lessons seen and never less than satisfactory. There is, however, a small element of unsatisfactory behaviour in Year 8 because the curriculum and teaching methods are too similar to those experienced previously in Year 7 and some more able youngsters can become bored and distracted if they are challenged insufficiently.
57. Nearly all are cheerful and purposeful in lessons and around the school. They genuinely help each other, have respect for one another and are proud of their school. This is apparent by the way that the School Council addresses issues of concern such as bullying and school rules. Relationships in the school are good and the adults provide very good role models. These relationships are reflected in the common purpose to succeed and commitment to hard work that pervades the school. This spirit contributes to the good levels of motivation evident in lessons and all planned activities.
58. Bullying is dealt with very effectively. The School Council has been involved in deciding what these procedures should be. No oppressive behaviour or bullying was seen during the inspection. Fixed term exclusions are used appropriately and in accordance with agreed procedures should a more serious incident arise. There was only one permanent exclusion last year. Parents are pleased with the way that the school encourages and recognises good behaviour.
59. Nearly all the pupils and students are very aware of other people's feelings. Mutual respect for each other and property, together with pride in the reputation of their school, are frequently evident. Ethnic minority pupils are well integrated into the school and relationships observed during the inspection were harmonious. The readiness to

exercise initiative and take responsibility, both in sports and in their studies, is further reflected in the pride with which many wear their merit badges on their blazers.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.
 - Relationships between the students and with other adults are very good.
60. Attitudes are very good. Through their very good behaviour, students provide a very good example. The development of personal skills and relationships is very good. Attendance is good.
61. At the time of the inspection, Year 12 comprised males who had been at Bishop Vesey's School and had stayed on and females and some males who had come to the school from other schools. It was obvious that those who had stayed on had made the newcomers feel welcome and as a result, after just two weeks of the autumn term, nearly all of those new to the school had settled in well.
62. Students work very well with each other in lessons. Their attitudes in planned leisure activities are purposeful.
63. Students are enthusiastic about school, show a strong interest in their work and take part in a very wide range of activities. They always behave well in and around the school and their behaviour in over half of the lessons seen was very good or excellent and good on nearly all other occasions. They are ready to help one another in lessons and relationships are invariably harmonious. Relationships are good. As a result, all the students are well included within the sixth form provision.
64. Many readily seek and accept responsibility. They respond well to the school's expectations of their role as registrars and look after classes until the teacher takes the register. They help with clubs and seek election as house captains or officers and sports captains.
65. They take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school to demonstrate maturity, self-discipline and a commitment to study. This prepares them well for their chosen futures.
66. Attendance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

HOW WELL ARE THE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good because expectations are high and nearly all respond very well to the frequently challenging work.
- Very good subject knowledge is skilfully explained through very well chosen teaching methods in the very good teaching.
- The quality of learning is very well managed and very good progress is made when there is good provision of a variety of well-matched and challenging tasks.
- The parents' very positive views are confirmed.

Areas for improvement

- The quality and use of assessment in Years 7,8 and 9 so that all are made fully aware of the National Curriculum standards expected in their targets.
- The matching of work to the full range of capabilities in science.
- The development and application of ICT in all subjects of the curriculum.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11 as well as in the sixth form. It was very good or better in 34 per cent of the lessons seen and good or better in 78 per cent. The quality of 5 per cent of the teaching and learning seen was less than satisfactory, representing eight of the one hundred and sixty nine lessons seen. No poor teaching or learning was seen. Excellent teaching and learning was seen on seven occasions: twice in both modern foreign languages and religious education in the main school and on one occasion in the sixth form in each of history, modern foreign languages and physical education.
68. Improvement has been very good since the last inspection because the priorities of the school development plan have been well implemented in nearly all the departmental development plans. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is much reduced and the proportion of very good or better teaching much increased since the last inspection.
69. These findings mirror very closely the views expressed by those parents who completed the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. High expectations that provide challenging work were indeed a very strong feature of much of the very good teaching seen, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
70. Some parents expressed concerns about the regularity and suitability of homework. This is a good feature of the teaching overall. It is very well used in English and religious education.
71. The parents' concerns about inconsistent practice and expectations were partially confirmed because there was evidence of some unsatisfactory learning when expectations were not asserted sufficiently, the match of the work to individual needs was unsatisfactory and, very occasionally indeed, behaviour was allowed to deteriorate.
72. The quality of teaching and learning was broadly consistent across the year groups. It was never less than satisfactory in Years 7 and 10 but unsatisfactory on one occasion in each of Years 9 and 11 and two occasions in Year 8. The quality of teaching and learning is more consistent than at the time of the last inspection.

73. There is a similar degree of consistency in nearly all subjects. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in English, mathematics, art, geography, music, religious education, modern foreign languages, physical education and business education. It is good in history, Latin and the three separate sciences. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 in design and technology but better in Years 7, 8 and 9 where it was satisfactory. The best teaching was seen in art, mathematics and geography and also in the smaller number of lessons seen in ICT, music and religious education.
74. In several subjects the quality of teaching was better in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years. This was the case in English, geography, history and modern foreign languages. In the small number of lessons seen in music it was better in Years 7, 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11.
75. The hallmarks of the good and better teaching are the very good subject knowledge and high expectations that earn respect, gain their interest and instil confidence. In the very good teaching, for example, in English, mathematics, geography and art, the chosen teaching methods fit well with the objectives of the lesson and ensure that there are very good gains in understanding and skills as well as knowledge. The high expectations are well matched to individual needs and, as a result, all are fully involved in the lesson, including those with identified special educational needs, those who have English as an additional language and those who are identified as gifted and talented.
76. When high expectations are communicated through thought-provoking questions, progress and the quality of their learning are very good. This was well illustrated in an excellent religious education lesson where such questions presented a level of challenge that inspired many, extending their understanding and arousing their curiosity. This lesson made an excellent contribution to their personal development.
77. In the very good teaching, high expectations are frequently linked to the very good management of learning. This is a regular feature of the very good teaching in mathematics where there are frequent opportunities to work in pairs, small groups and as a whole class. In all these arrangements, activities that are conducted with pace and provide challenging activities. This involves the very effective use of questions that develop understanding and encourage mathematical thought. It is also a prominent feature of the good teaching in Latin and ICT as well as that in geography where the very good pace and careful match of the work to the individual needs of all also contribute to very good progress.
78. The effective combination of very good subject knowledge and skills with very good management of learning is a strong feature in much of the very good teaching, for example, in music. Such very good methods involve everyone because the choice of music is very well matched to the levels of interest and maturity. Such features are also a strength in the good teaching of physical education. These qualities are also evident in the good teaching of history which provides a good range of activities to stimulate a lively interest, particularly in Years 10 and 11. On such occasions all made very good progress.
79. In many lessons, individuals, including those with identified special educational needs, are often well supported so that any misunderstanding or uncertainty is quickly resolved and progress made. This was a good feature of some of the lessons seen in ICT and science and a recurring feature in the very good teaching of art.
80. The quality and use of assessment, particularly to inform planning and match work to the needs of individuals, is good overall but better in Years 10 and 11 than in the earlier years. It is a particularly strong feature in art where nearly all make very good

progress because the planning very skilfully provides for the changing needs of individuals, contributing greatly to the very good relationships that support very good progress. It is a very strong feature in the teaching of geography, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where they are regularly told how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Marking in science is occasionally unsatisfactory because it does not do this.

81. Time, resources and support staff are generally well used and particularly so in Years 10 and 11. In geography, time is very well used, thus ensuring very good progress by age 14 within an allocation of time that is below the median nationally. Very good use is made of the school library. The skills required to make full use of this excellent facility are very well taught. This enables many to develop research skills that are much higher than those usually found at the age of 16 years. Very good use is made of resources to provide stimulating experiments in the good teaching of science. Occasionally in physical education there is insufficient time provided to plan and evaluate work in gymnastics.
82. The quality of learning is very occasionally unsatisfactory in a few subjects in Year 8 because the management of the attitudes and behaviour is unsatisfactory. As a result the progress of the rest of the class is impeded. This occurred on a single occasion in both English and modern foreign languages.
83. The small number with special educational needs are well taught. There is a good level of awareness of their special needs. In most subjects, where it is appropriate, work is suitably matched to meet their individual needs. Two part-time learning support assistants provide additional help. As a result they are included fully in lessons and make good progress.
84. Satisfactory provision is made for those who are identified as gifted and talented, particularly through additional curricular opportunities. There was no evidence available to indicate the progress made by those who have English as an additional language. The small number who are not fluent in English when they start at the school, receive a good level of additional support.
85. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall. There is no planned strategy for teaching the basic skills of numeracy, literacy or ICT. As a result, provision is uneven.
86. Basic literacy skills are taught satisfactorily overall. Provision is good in English where many make good gains in writing skills by age 14 and also develop well their reading and speaking skills. There is generally good provision in music, modern foreign languages, physical education and religious education. Provision to develop these skills in science is unsatisfactory overall but attention to the understanding and use of technical vocabulary is good.
87. Technical skills are particularly well taught in art. This is an important factor contributing to very good progress by age 16 years.
88. Numeracy skills are well taught in mathematics. Key objectives for their consolidation, application and development are not included in the schemes of work of other subjects. ICT skills are well taught in art, geography and music.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning in mathematics, art and geography.
- Very good subject knowledge and high expectations.
- Most learn very well because their key skills are good.

Areas for improvement

- Expectations and challenge in design and technology.

89. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It was very good or better in 32 per cent of the lessons seen. Overall, good or better teaching and learning was seen in 82 per cent of lessons, indicating a good degree of consistency. The quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory in three lessons. The best teaching was seen in mathematics.
90. Many of the very good features evident in the main school are also regular features of teaching and learning in the sixth form. They are further enhanced by the greater maturity and increasing independence of the students and the greater opportunities for teachers to demonstrate their very good specialist subject knowledge.
91. Whilst a high proportion of good or better teaching was seen in nearly all subjects, the proportion of very good teaching and learning varied more widely. It was evident in 30 per cent or more of the lessons in geography, history, modern foreign languages and physical education. Very good teaching was far less frequently seen in science and design and technology.
92. The teaching of key skills is not timetabled as a separate lesson. There is, however, good provision within general studies and most subjects draw upon and contribute to them. The strength of students' learning in the areas of communication, ICT and the application of number is an important factor contributing to standards that are above those frequently found in sixth forms nationally. Where teaching is very good, for example, in mathematics and art, not only are all the students very well challenged, but they are also encouraged to think, feel and express themselves individually.
93. Individual needs are well met in lessons. Those females who had most recently joined the sixth form in September were starting to participate well in lessons. Occasionally in Year 12, where teaching groups are large, for example, in English language and literature, the match of work did not fully reflect the wide range of capabilities.
94. Special educational needs are well met. Those who have English as an additional language are sufficiently fluent and literate to cope with the demands of A level studies when they enter the sixth form. When this is occasionally not the case, individual support is sensitive and effective.
95. All students are well included because effective guidance and support results in a generally good match of courses to individual needs and aspirations. There are well-managed opportunities to study a good range of minority subjects within the local consortium of schools and in association with the local college. Retention rates are very good overall.
96. When the quality of teaching and learning was unsatisfactory in design and technology, progress was unsatisfactory because there was insufficient awareness of how work might be improved.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

Strengths

- Curricular aims are fulfilled very successfully.
- Very good provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Excellent provision for extra-curricular activities.
- Very good provision for personal development.
- Provision is inclusive and all get a fair deal.

Areas for further improvement

- The planned development of ICT skills in the subjects of the National Curriculum.
- The planned development of literacy skills in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

97. The school fulfils very successfully its aim to offer a broad academic curriculum, a varied and vigorous programme of physical education and sport and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. The special features of the school's curriculum, including the games afternoon and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities for all, make an excellent contribution to their personal development. The curriculum for those with special educational needs is appropriate and none are disapplied.
98. The balance of the curriculum is weighted towards foreign languages, both modern and classical and the three sciences. All study the latter and many, two languages to age 16 years. The provision is socially inclusive, seeking to remove any learning barriers and ensure that no doors are closed to individual aspirations. All get a fair deal.
99. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is good. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, plus a programme of personal and social education. In addition to French, all study Latin in Years 7 and add German in Year 8, before choosing between the two in Year 9 to make room for an introductory course in business studies. All study three separate sciences.
100. The allocation of time is well-managed. Time for these extra subjects is found by limiting the allocation for English, mathematics and humanities subjects. Efficient use of teaching time in these areas minimises any adverse effects, but it does affect the depth of coverage in history. The art curriculum is particularly good in terms of its breadth, offering a wide variety of learning in a good range of media. There is very good provision for fieldwork and the use of computers in geography.
101. A very large number benefit from the instrumental tuition provided in music. However, the poor accommodation does restrict the quality of composing and performing in lessons.
102. Planning does not provide the required opportunities for ICT in all subjects of the National Curriculum.
103. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is very good. The conflicting demands on time for individual subjects are very well managed. In order to meet aspirations but not overburden the boys and also to increase the time allocated to the three sciences, the number of examination courses has recently been reduced from twelve subjects to ten. They get off to a flying start on GCSE courses after the Year 9 examinations in the second half of the summer term.
104. All study GCSE courses in English language and literature, mathematics, the three separate sciences and a modern foreign language. Individual needs are well met,

including the opportunity for the most able to complete their examination course in mathematics in the autumn term of Year 11. Their needs are also very well met by the provision of a choice of three options from a wide range of subjects, including Italian and business studies. In addition, a 'core skills' course has been introduced this year to provide lessons in religious education, ICT, personal and social education and careers in Year 10, replacing the GCSE short courses in religious education and ICT, which finish with the current Year 11. The basic provision for ICT is enhanced by the fact that two-thirds of Year 10 have chosen to study the full course at GCSE.

105. There is no formal policy for the planned provision for the gifted and talented but extra-curricular activities are provided in most subjects to meet their particular needs. In some areas such as art, music and physical education this provision is very good. In history, gifted and talented pupils are given further website references to encourage reading and research. Challenging work is also set in business education and timetabled lessons for ICT.
106. An excellent programme of extra-curricular activities provides further enrichment. During the inspection week, over 30 clubs and activities were available, ranging from subject support groups in art, chemistry, English, history, ICT and maths, to interest groups such as bridge, chess, Christian Union, gardening, model making and war games, plus the daily sports and music practices. This programme reflects a very high level of staff commitment to providing extra opportunities to develop subject knowledge and personal interests beyond the classroom.
107. The school has won a Sportsmark Gold Award for physical education and plays full fixtures in a number of sports. Music is also strong outside lessons, providing a chamber choir and various instrumental groups, in addition to the main school choir and orchestra. There are also opportunities to travel abroad with the school, such as the Year 9 visits to Normandy and the history field trip to the battlefields of the Great War.
108. The school makes good provision for work-related education. It is fairly low key in Years 7, 8 and 9, concentrating on developing self-awareness through the personal and social education programme. Year 9 boys look at career biographies and make workplace visits, which are arranged through the Education and Business Partnership. In Year 10, the careers module in general studies makes good use of commercial software that analyses individual's interests, suggests a range of suitable occupations and provides information. All spend a fortnight on work experience in the summer term. Careers guidance in Year 11 focuses on further and higher education and practical exercises, such as writing a curriculum vitae.
109. Links with the careers service are good. The school's careers adviser interviews all Year 11 boys in occupational groups in the autumn term and offers individual interviews in the spring term. All also have access to more information through the careers section in the school library. The careers software is available on the school's network of computers. This is another very inclusive feature of the school's curriculum that fulfils its aims very well indeed.
110. Good links have been established with the community and other schools and colleges. Selection at the age of 11 is from more than 50 primary schools. To support continuity there are planned visits to primary schools to observe the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Good links have also been established with some of the local inner city secondary schools, including collaboration in staff training and links with subject departments. The religious education department has links with local churches through Christian youth workers.

111. A small number of unsatisfactory features remain. The time for religious education in the new arrangements for Year 10 may be insufficient to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The provision for ICT within the other subjects of the curriculum does not meet fully the statutory requirements.
112. The overall provision for boys' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. It has improved since the previous inspection. Some subjects have policies and include provision in their lesson plans.
113. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. A carefully planned programme of assemblies provides a range of opportunities to reflect on matters of spiritual and moral value. The ethos of these occasions is very good, providing opportunities for praise, encouragement and the rewarding of good work. Music, English, form time and religious education and art also make a valuable contribution. The school does not meet the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
114. Provision for moral development is very good. A strong emphasis on personal responsibility underpins the school's approach to the very good quality of moral education. There is a very well understood framework of values. Principles that help distinguish right from wrong are reinforced in all subjects. This is particularly so in religious education where; for example, in Year 10, there is a very good opportunity to examine carefully and debate the system in this country for detaining young offenders. In a Lower School assembly, two boys acted out very well a sketch illustrating the theme, 'Thou shalt not steal'.
115. Provision for social development is also very good. There are many opportunities in lessons to work together in pairs and groups. Charity work is promoted in all years and individuals show initiative in recommending causes to support. The school's aims encourage qualities of self-respect, self-discipline, leadership and responsibility. The many team sports and musical activities that the school provides make a very good contribution to team work and balance very well the elements of competition and co-operation. For example, musicians and singers from the school and the local girls' school, are rehearsing for their forthcoming joint production, 'Patience'.
116. The provision for cultural development is good. There is a good range of opportunities in music, religious education, art and English. All are offered the opportunity to visit theatres and museums. There are French and German exchange groups and language weekends. All Year 7 pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential visit to the school's own activity centre in North Wales0.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- The good range of available courses.
- The very well planned courses in general studies.
- Very good provision for enrichment.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for religious education and a daily act of collective worship for all.

117. There is good provision to meet the interests, aptitudes and needs of the students. There is a very good range of A level courses that provide a good degree of development from previous work at GCSE. There is no provision currently for vocational courses.
118. The entry requirement to the sixth form is quite modest. Consequently, the range of capability is wider than is usually found in a grammar school. Over one quarter of students are new to the school and most of these are female. The curricular aims provide well for the wide experience and background of the students.
119. There are no taught GCSE courses. The least able students have the opportunity to take again their GCSE examination prior to commencing A level courses. A consortium arrangement is developing and affects a minority of subjects such as music, law and psychology. Time allocations to subjects are equitable. Students have equal access to the curriculum. They get a fair deal.
120. All follow a four AS course in Year 12 and most select three to continue to A2 level. In addition, a very good general studies course, taught to AS or A level, further broadens the areas of study. It includes the opportunity to select a short course in ICT but this is not a requirement.
121. Key Skills are taught through subjects as well as general studies. The provision is good. For example, communication skills are developed so that students know, read and synthesise information and organise writing. Numeracy and graphical skills are developed well in the sciences. Opportunities for developing skills in ICT are more limited, although many students are required to refer to the Internet for independent research. Independent study skills are encouraged, but for many there is insufficient attention given to file organisation.
122. There is no compulsory religious education or collective worship for all students in the sixth form. Statutory requirements are not fully met.
123. Extra-curricular provision is very good. For sport it is excellent. Many participate in the very good range of sports activities, including the recent additions of sailing and canoeing. A thriving Young Enterprise group has had a good link with National Westminster Bank and the Engineering Education Scheme, also linked to a local company, provides an excellent opportunity for students interested in mechanical engineering. The school also has established good relationships with local universities so that students may attend events.
124. The proximity of the local college allows the school to use their expertise to provide A level law and psychology courses and there are links between the physical education departments over the use of playing fields. There is good collaboration with the local universities of Birmingham and Aston and former students at university are used as consultants for sixth-formers.

125. Students are well supported in their personal development. An active programme of personal, social and health education is provided in form groups and through assemblies. Much of the form period is spent in allowing the tutor to discuss matters with the individual and therefore is not always effective for the majority of students.
126. Careers education is organised well, although there is no interview with a careers officer unless requested. Volunteers from the Business Education Partnership give one-to-one guidance and a limited amount of work shadowing is possible in holidays.
127. Students have well developed links with local organisations, undertaking community service, for example, in a local hospital. A particular association has been developed with the Barnardo's business initiative scheme, whereby students raise money for the charity. Other opportunities for responsibility are satisfactory. Three officers are selected by staff to represent each house and all sixth form students are expected to carry out a duty; for example, looking after younger boys or helping with games.
128. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
129. There is a wide range of opportunities to enhance their social development. These include activities such as helping with school events or acting as mentors to younger pupils. There is a good range of opportunities for involvement in community and charity work.
130. There is a good range of opportunities to participate in the life of the school. These include sport, music, social work and activities related to curriculum areas, including residential opportunities. The good range of opportunities provided to work within the school community is used well to enhance students' life skills.
131. Cultural opportunities are provided through strong links locally and abroad. There are many opportunities to develop an awareness and understanding of other cultures; for example, in French, students discuss the position of illegal immigrants in their own and other countries and in music they study music from around the world.
132. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities to reflect on learning in many subjects. The statutory requirement to provide religious education for all is not fully met.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Strengths

- Very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of individuals.
- Very good arrangements for monitoring attendance.
- Very good procedures for monitoring the progress of individual pupils and students.
- Very good target setting.

Areas for improvement

- Procedures to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and students, including the setting of targets.
- The use of assessment to inform planning.
- The initial assessment of pupils and students who have English as an additional language.
- The use of the standards described in the National Curriculum in assessment procedures.

133. There are very good procedures for child protection and ensuring the welfare of individuals. Personal support and guidance are good. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting the individual's personal development. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and those for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are also good.
134. The provision of care is very well managed. The provision is very well led. The teamwork of those with management responsibilities is very good. The tutorial system is effective.
135. There is a good level of contact and communication through the form tutor. The knowledge of individual needs and circumstances is good. Referral arrangements work well. The partnership with parents, primarily through the head of year, is good. It is well supported by an efficient and comprehensive individual records system that is held centrally. This covers academic performance and results, personal development and the monitoring of behaviour. Those parents who responded to the questionnaire are happy with the care provided by the school.
136. Health and safety matters are dealt with well. There are effective procedures for first aid and 24 of the staff are qualified to provide it. There are sufficient first aid kits, located in the various buildings on the site. The very effective implementation of procedures was observed during the inspection. All statutory procedures, such as inspections of portable electrical and fire and gym equipment are satisfactorily completed.
137. Good support is provided by outside agencies. These include the Burlington Centre, providing behavioural support in the school and at a centre, the educational psychological service and the education welfare service (EWS).
138. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. A well-administered, computerised system provides very good management information including overall figures for year groups and individuals. This information is well used by Heads of Year to monitor individual attendances and by the educational welfare service to support joint action.

139. The procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are well established and include a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Their application is consistent throughout the school. This contributes to the positive atmosphere. The procedures for dealing with the monitoring and elimination of oppressive behaviour have been agreed through the school council. They work well.
140. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection and are a strong feature of the school's provision.
141. The procedures for assessing standards and progress are very good. There has been good progress in developing procedures and practice since the previous inspection, particularly in target setting. These arrangements are now very good.
142. There remain some inconsistencies between subject areas in the use of the standards described in the National Curriculum to support assessment. The degree to which these are shared in Years 7, 8 and 9 is inconsistent across the different subjects.
143. The school's procedures for identifying and monitoring the small number with special educational needs are good, including the use of individual education plans. The arrangements for the initial assessment of those who have English as an additional language are unsatisfactory.
144. The assessment standard on entry to the school is very good and includes the local entrance and national test results. The early use of a commercial assessment test in Year 7 and annual school examination results thereafter, provide further indicators of standards and achievement to inform target setting. The monitoring of individual progress is very good. There is a planned interview with the tutor at least twice a year to monitor academic progress, personal development and involvement in extra-curricular activities and to negotiate targets, using assessment information as the starting point.
145. Reporting arrangements are good. An annual report and an interim progress report are sent to parents each year. The timings of these reports are such that there is never more than a term's gap before parents are informed of their child's progress and attainment. Most annual reports provide good quality information about the standard reached and what is required for further improvement. The school meets fully the legal requirement to report to parents on standards at age 14 years.
146. Good use is made of ICT to maintain individual records of assessment data. These are communicated well to heads of subject departments. The provision of assessment information to monitor and evaluate inclusion, including those with English as an additional language, the gifted and talented and those with identified special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
147. The use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory overall. Practice is inconsistent. Provision in geography, for example, has some good features, including involving the boys in self-evaluation but it does not include reference to the standards described in the National Curriculum. A similar situation exists in history. The assessment of speaking and listening in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9. In art and design and technology initial assessments are carried out at the start of Year 7. This establishes an effective system of ongoing assessment to monitor standards and progress at age 14 years. In particular, the system helps in the identification of the gifted and talented. It is also used with effect to motivate boys by setting targets. Even in this very good provision, as also in the good procedures in science and mathematics, the link with the standards described in the National Curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Very good procedures to monitor academic progress of individual students.

148. The students are well supported. The procedures for monitoring their academic progress are very good. For supporting and monitoring their personal development they are good.
149. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance are good. The provision for careers education and guidance for future courses, study or career opportunities is satisfactory. The procedures for improving and monitoring attendance are good.
150. There is good teamwork in the provision of individual support and guidance of the students. Procedures concerning health, safety and welfare are good.
151. Induction arrangements are good. They are supplemented by further meetings for parents and students. During the inspection, the school held a highly informative and very useful evening on 'How to Survive in the Sixth Form'. It was very well attended.
152. The comprehensive records for each student are well maintained. These include all academic and personal achievements. Each student also maintains a personal record of achievement.
153. The quality of individual guidance and support is a strong feature. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. All statutory requirements are met. The procedures in place to monitor each student's standard and progress are very good. The very good use of a commercial service is well established in the sixth form. It is used to predict as well as to review and evaluate progress. The information so collected is used effectively to guide planning. Well-established monitoring and assessment procedures have recently been adjusted to support the new curricular arrangements involving AS levels.
154. Individual targets are set at the start of the sixth form, based on previous examination results. These are reviewed regularly thereafter, including planned interviews. The arrangements to negotiate the setting and revision of targets are good. They also include opportunity for reflection on progress.
155. A similar program of formal interviews and reports is repeated in Year 13, with the addition of a UCAS interview during the autumn term.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

156. The school has good links with parents. They are satisfied with the quality of education provided. They receive a good quality of information on a regular basis about their children's progress and about events in the school. Their involvement with the school is good.
157. The parents are pleased overall with the school and what it provides and achieves. They consider that the standards are good and that their children make good progress. They are satisfied with the attitudes and values that the school promotes. They hold differing views about the level of homework set, some considering it too little and some too much. Minor concerns were expressed about the number of GCSE subjects available and about the misbehaviour of a minority of pupils. Parents' questionnaires also indicated minor concerns about how well they were informed

about progress and how closely the school works with parents. These matters are addressed in the parents' summary.

158. The school provides parents with a well-presented school prospectus and informative annual governors' report. They receive regular correspondence and newsletters produced by the pupils and students, which keep them informed of events in the school, but they do not receive a newsletter from the school itself. Annual reports to parents are of a high standard. These are supplemented by interim reports that provide very useful information on progress during the year.
159. There is a flourishing Parents' Association. It organises one main event each year in the form of a Gala Ball. This raises lots of money for the school and funds have contributed to major developments, including the new sports hall and equipment for the school. Other events and social gatherings, such as quizzes, provide further opportunities for parents to become involved in the life of the school.

Sixth Form

Students' views of the school

160. The students' questionnaires were issued to Year 12 and Year 13 students just after the start of the new term. Year 12 students had only just started. They had limited experience and knowledge of the sixth form upon which to base some of their responses.
161. Nearly all are pleased with the choice of courses. They consider them to be well suited to their talents and career aspirations. They appreciate how well they are taught and challenged and how well they are helped to study and research topics on their own. Nearly all are happy with the accessibility of tutors if they have any difficulties. They enjoy the sixth form provision.
162. Approximately half had very limited experience upon which to base their views about support with personal problems and guidance about future options. They completed the questionnaire in the first week of the term. Caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the results of the questionnaire. This does not distinguish the views of Year 12 and Year 13 students.
163. Nearly all the aspects in the questionnaire that produced responses showing a less positive response were dealt with very well at the evening meeting for students with their parents, held during the inspection. The students would like the school to respond more fully to their views and have still more opportunities to exercise leadership in the sixth form.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The very good partnership between the headteacher and the governing body defines very well the longer-term direction of the school.
- The very successful fulfilment of the school's aims.
- The very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Areas for further improvement

- Procedures to evaluate the success of major decisions.
- The inclusiveness of monitoring arrangements to cover particular groups of pupils and students.

164. Leadership and management are good. The findings of the inspection confirm the very positive views expressed by those parents who completed the questionnaire.
165. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Several of the good features reported at that time are now very good. Most of the small number of unsatisfactory features have been dealt with. Very effective action has been taken to introduce new leadership where performance was previously unsatisfactory, for example, in art and history.
166. The strengths of the headteacher's leadership are: a firm commitment further to raise standards a sensitive respect for the traditional values of the school; the skilful management of the pace of change that ensures a very good degree of inclusion and an increasing readiness to embrace new initiatives. This has included, most recently, an involvement in the Excellence in Cities (EiC) initiative and preparations to bid for specialist school status.
167. School development planning is satisfactory overall. It is very effective in setting the longer-term direction of the school within a four-year planning cycle. Priorities are well defined because at the heart of the plan lies a good level of shared commitment to raise standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning. The findings described earlier in this report indicate that the leadership and management of the school have been very effective in fulfilling this aim.
168. The planning cycle is well defined. It begins with a staff conference every four years. This promotes a very good degree of involvement, including a very good partnership with governors at the first stage of the plan's evolution.
169. The links between the school plan and departmental plans are satisfactory overall. They are particularly good in art, geography and physical education.
170. Some unsatisfactory features, noted at the time of the last inspection, remain. Frequently the emphasis is upon tasks to complete rather than defined improvements to lead and manage. As a result, the annual review concentrates mainly on task completion rather than the evaluation of spending decisions and their impact on improved performance.
171. The link between the school development plan (SDP) and the careful preparation of the annual budget is broadly satisfactory but is not explicit enough in current documentation. As a result, it is not possible to track and subsequently evaluate the effectiveness of funding additional to the basic budget.
172. The highly effective role of the governing body is a very strong feature of the school's provision. A long-standing commitment to the values of the school, a high level of

expertise and an excellent understanding of their strategic role are major strengths. The committees are very well led and managed. The headteacher keeps them fully informed. This includes an annual report that provides an excellent review of what has happened. The opportunity for an increasing number of others to contribute to this report is a good feature of these arrangements. Heads of subject make regular presentations to governors. As a result, the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths of the school and also the areas where it needs to improve.

173. The committees of the governing body are very well led and managed. Their terms of reference are well defined and their contribution to the development of the school is very well co-ordinated by the chair of governors who attends all committee meetings. They have exercised very good leadership since the last inspection in managing a major building programme and have been fully involved in preparing the current bid for specialist school status. The Foundation committee has been particularly diligent in monitoring the facilities and establishing a programme of planned improvements.
174. As is often the case, the governors are very dependent upon professional advice in the monitoring and development of curricular provision. Their decisions are carefully considered but occasionally do not fully meet statutory requirements. For example, they have decided that religious education should not be compulsory in the sixth form. Statutory requirements are not fully met to provide ICT in the teaching of all subjects of the National Curriculum and also for a daily act of collective worship for all the students.
175. Subject leadership is good. It is excellent in art and physical education but the temporary arrangements are unsatisfactory in design and technology. The changes made in the management of care and guidance shortly before the last inspection have produced a good quality of provision.
176. Overall, the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and provision are satisfactory. Arrangements to monitor the quality of provision and particularly the teaching through direct observation, are good overall. There is a good strategy for performance management in which the headteacher has shown very good leadership.
177. Procedures to review provision and performance are very good overall. Evaluation is unsatisfactory. The monitoring roles are well defined within the job descriptions of the SMT. These include the line management of subject 'parishes'. Coupled with twice-yearly departmental reviews of performance, led by the headteacher, this has established a good framework for monitoring and review. Provision for the monitoring of particular groups of pupils and students; for example, the gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory.
178. The monitoring arrangements in subject departments are good. They are much more consistent than at the time of the last inspection. As a result, the effectiveness of actions to bring about further improvement is good. This is an important reason why standards have risen so significantly in art.
179. Financial management is satisfactory. A good feature is that the annual budget is fully allocated. The pattern of expenditure is broadly in-line with the median values nationally. The priorities of the SDP are well supported through good financial planning but the broad profile of expenditure and sources of income are not described explicitly in the plan. This makes subsequent evaluation imprecise. These areas for improvement were also identified in the most recent auditor's report, September 2001.
180. Arrangements for the allocation of specific grants are satisfactory but are not defined fully in the SDP; for example, the spending decisions for the gifted and talented boys within the funding from EiC are described only in the headteacher's annual report to governors.

181. The principles of best value are generally well applied to all major expenditure decisions; for example, in the decision to lease rather than purchase computer equipment as part of the school's ICT strategy.
182. ICT is well used to support the management systems of the school, including the monitoring of progress and attendance. All members of the SMT have a good level of expertise and all the heads of subject have a laptop computer to support their management tasks.
183. The management of those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Identification and recording procedures are good. There is a named governor. The overall management of provision is satisfactory, including the preparation of individual education plans. The management of the budget is only partially delegated to the special needs co-ordinator. The formal arrangements to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision are unsatisfactory.
184. The management of provision for the identified gifted and talented is satisfactory but, again, the budget is not managed by the person with delegated responsibility for the provision. Provision for those who have English as an additional language is managed satisfactorily. The school receives no additional funding but allocates resources from within its basic budget to provide any necessary additional support. Details of the expenditure plan and arrangements to evaluate its effectiveness and efficiency are unsatisfactory.
185. The development of the school's facilities is well led and managed. Since the last inspection new facilities for physical education have been built. There have been slight modifications to those for art and design and technology. Displayed work is very good in art and physical education.
186. The current accommodation is satisfactory overall. The long history of the school site is part of its charm but also presents many management challenges. Access for wheelchairs is unsatisfactory in some areas of the school.
187. Overall, the quality of displayed work is satisfactory. It is very good in art and physical education.
188. The accommodation for music is unsatisfactory. Soundproofing and decoration are poor. Unsatisfactory use is made of the potentially advantageous features of the open-plan facilities in the design and technology area.
189. The school has adequate resources. Provision is satisfactory overall. Facilities are excellent within the very well managed school library. Their planned and occasional use is very effective. The ratio of computers to pupils and students is above the national average. The resources are used efficiently and effectively. However, demand continues to outstrip supply.
190. Expenditure on learning resources has been above the median nationally for the last two years as part of a well-managed improvement strategy. Learning resources are now very good in art. Good use of practical equipment is a feature of the best teaching in science. The provision for artefacts is unsatisfactory in the otherwise satisfactory quantity and quality of resources in religious education.
191. The staffing provision is very good overall. It is deployed efficiently within an overall budget that is broadly in-line with the median nationally as well as with the profile of income generated by the number on roll.

192. The school has a sufficient number of staff and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Many are very experienced and very well qualified.
193. There has been a significant increase in the level of technical and educational support since the last inspection. Their deployment is good, including provision to meet identified special educational needs in a small number of instances.
194. The deployment of part-time teachers is satisfactory. The school has successfully overcome some increasing difficulties in the recruitment of specialist staff. Procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers are satisfactory and there are also satisfactory arrangements within the graduate teacher training programme. These include informal advice as well as planned observations of lessons by both members of the SMT and heads of department.

Sixth Form

Strengths

- Very good teamwork in the management of information, guidance and support for the students.
- A strong and shared commitment to high standards of personal integrity and social responsibility.
- Very good management of statistical information to support the monitoring of individual's progress.

Areas for improvement

- The arrangements to meet fully the legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
- The definition and evaluation of sixth form expenditure in both the school development plan and departmental development plans.
- The social areas within accommodation.

195. Leadership and management are good. Very good teamwork ensures that the various leadership and management functions are very well integrated. As a result, the monitoring of standards, setting of targets, provision of guidance and the availability of careers advice is coherent, efficient and effective. There is no documented, sixth form development plan but the overall strategic vision is good. Day-to-day administration is also good.
196. Nearly all pupils in Year 11 continue their studies into the sixth form. As a result of its large size and the well-organised opportunities for many to exercise leadership and lend support in the main school, the sixth form has a very positive impact on the overall ethos of the school.
197. Opportunities to exercise leadership, including the role of the school captain and those students with additional responsibilities, sets a positive example and tone. This was well illustrated in the quiet efficiency with which duties were undertaken during the dismissal from a year assembly. However, some students who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire consider that there are insufficient opportunities for them to exercise leadership and responsibility in the management of the sixth form.
198. The governing body fulfils well its responsibilities towards the sixth form. Through its committees it monitors very well both provision and performance. The Foundation committee is alert to accommodation issues. The governors have supported very well the strategic development and best interests of the school's sixth form. They do not support the provision of compulsory religious education and a daily act of collective worship. As a result, statutory requirements are not fully met.

199. Resources are well used and the planning of the timetable is good. The sixth form is cost effective overall, despite the provision of several very large and very small teaching groups. There is no evidence that large teaching groups are affecting standards or progress adversely but occasionally there is an unsatisfactory degree of match of work to the full range of capabilities in the group; for example, sometimes in English and science. It is not a significant issue in mathematics. Overall, the school spends slightly less than the defined budget share to fund the sixth form provision. Principles of best value are generally well applied; for example, in decisions concerning the provision of courses within the school or as part of the local consortium arrangements.
200. The current accommodation is unsatisfactory. The students' common room and study room facilities are basic. Their general appearance is unstimulating and unattractive. The organisation of tutor rooms variously across the school has the advantage of spreading the influence and presence of the sixth form more widely but there is limited opportunity for the students to establish and demonstrate a corporate identity.
201. The quantity and quality of learning resources are satisfactory. The library provision for the sixth form is very good. However, some design and technology textbooks are out of date and hardware for computer-aided design (CAD) does not match software. Despite the above average level of provision, the quantity and quality of ICT hardware is insufficient to meet the high demand and considerable skills of many of the students.
202. The match of teaching expertise to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The preparations and professional development to teach curriculum 2000 have been very good. The high level of specialist expertise across a wide range of academic subjects and very good coaching skills to support the excellent games provision are very strong features of the overall sixth form provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff of the school should:

(1) Raise standards in design and technology by:

- monitoring standards more regularly;
- setting targets for improvement;
- providing more pace and challenge in teaching;
- increasing the use of ICT;
- improving assessment arrangements and marking of work;
- using the new facilities more effectively.

(Paragraphs: 14, 16, 19, 23, 175, 245, 246, 247, 251, 255, 256)

(2) Evaluate rigorously major decisions within the school development plan by:

- defining more clearly the intended gains in standards or the quality of provision;
- particularly learning;
- defining more fully the allocated funding for particular planning objectives;
- setting targets that are specific and measurable.

(Paragraphs: 171, 179, 180)

(3) Make more challenging curriculum provision in Year 8 to motivate all the boys by:

- reviewing schemes of work in all subjects to provide an increased level of challenge;
- extending the range of teaching and learning methods;
- providing a greater variety of activities to stimulate the boys' interests.

(Paragraphs: 17, 56, 82, 208)

(4) Plan in detail how knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT will be taught in each subject of the national curriculum by:

- identifying the knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT that are required;
- to provide high quality learning in each subject of the National Curriculum;
- identifying opportunities to raise standards further in each subject of the National Curriculum through the use of ICT;
- co-ordinating this provision in order to avoid duplication of effort or activity;
- monitoring rigorously the progressive development of ICT skills across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs: 46, 111, 174, 231, 279, 282, 297, 314, 322)

When drawing up the action plan it is recommended that attention also be given to:

- improving procedures to monitor the progress of different groups, including the gifted and talented and those who have English as an additional language.

(Paragraphs: 21, 22, 146)

- increasing the number of A*/A grades in the GCSE examinations.

(Paragraph: 30)

- increasing the use of the standards described in the National Curriculum when setting targets;

(Paragraphs: 142, 231)

- improving procedures for the initial assessment of those who have English as an additional language.

(Paragraph: 143)

- improving the accommodation for music.

(Paragraphs: 188, 302).

Sixth form

In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff of the school should:

(1) **Meet fully the statutory requirements for religious education by:**

- Reviewing current policy and taking advice through consultation with the local SACRE.

(Paragraphs: 122, 132)

(2) **Make provision for ICT resources in all courses, subject to available resources by:**

- identifying opportunities to raise the standards of key skills still further in each subject through the use of ICT;
- co-ordinating this provision in order to avoid duplication of effort or activity;
- monitoring rigorously the progressive development of ICT skills across the sixth form.

(Paragraphs: 121, 334, 393)

(3) **Improve accommodation by:**

- involving students in a strategy to improve the quality of the current social areas;
- improving provision for music by better sound-proofing;
- providing more immediate access to essential resources when subjects are not taught in specialist rooms.

(Paragraphs: 200, 302)

When drawing up the action plan it is recommended that attention also be given to:

- meeting the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

(Paragraph: 198)

- formalising a development plan for the sixth form.

(Paragraph: 195)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7-11	111
	Sixth form	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		169

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	4	35	46	21	5	0	0
Percentage	4	32	41	19	4	0	0

Sixth form

Number	3	15	29	8	3	0	0
Percentage	5	26	50	14	5	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7–Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	614	267
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	30	6

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	24	1

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	161

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	124	0	124

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	124	124	124
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	124	124	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (98)	100 (98)	100 (97)
	National	63 (63)	65 (642)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	92 (83)	100 (98)	90 (77)
	National	28 (28)	42(38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	122	124	124
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	122	124	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (98)	100 (99)	100 (98)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	87 (76)	98 (96)	89 (75)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	124	0	124

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	113	123	123
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	113	123	123
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	91 (94)	99 (99)	99 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	School	58
	National	38.4

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form (Year 13)

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	199	46	245

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	21.0	20.5	20.9	5.2	4.5	5.1
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National	n/a	76.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	4
Indian	83
Pakistani	50
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	15
White	653
Any other minority ethnic group	59

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	4	0
Pakistani	1	1
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	18	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	22.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	2561309
Total expenditure	2579113
Expenditure per pupil	2948
Balance brought forward from previous year	26332
Balance carried forward to next year	8528

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	881
Number of questionnaires returned	514

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	49	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	36	50	7	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	55	5	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	8	2	6
The teaching is good.	33	53	5	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	47	11	2	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	45	6	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	52	14	4	5
The school is well led and managed.	42	44	6	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	47	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	40	8	1	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

The quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Results at ages 14 and 16 have been consistently well above national averages over the last three years.
- Progress is very good at age 16 years.
- By the age of 16, good analytical skills produce an assured personal response to literature.
- A high proportion of the teaching is very good. Lessons are well-paced and the work is challenging.

Areas for further improvement

- The emphasis on learning objectives in planning to indicate expected progress.
- The match of work to meet the needs of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.

203. Results in the national tests at age 14 in 2000 were in the top 5 per cent nationally and in-line with the average for similar schools. They were higher in comparison with science, but lower than those in mathematics, partly reflecting a pattern of lower prior attainment in English than in the other core subjects. The proportion obtaining Level 7 and above was higher than in previous years and above the average for grammar schools nationally.

204. Results have fluctuated since the last inspection and those for 2001 were lower than in the previous year. Results in 2000 were well above average at age 16 in both GCSE English and English literature for all schools and similar to the average for selective schools nationally. They dipped slightly in English in 2001 but were higher still in English literature with more than half obtaining the highest grades A/A*. Results from 1998 to 2000 have been consistently good and results during this period in both GCSE examinations exceeded the average of achievements in other subjects.

205. Standards seen during the inspection are generally in-line with these results. The most able pupils in Years 7-9 use language well and many produce excellent research projects. When they join the school at the age of 11, the standards in reading of nearly all are above those expected nationally. Standards in writing are lower with approximately half exceeding the standards expected nationally. The writing of the least able is brief and sometimes inaccurate. Reading standards are generally high and most are developing sound critical responses to texts at the age of 14 years. Standards of speaking and listening are better than those expected nationally, although few examples of boys speaking at length were noted during the inspection. By the age of 16, many of the more able respond in class with detailed, perceptive insights, making links across various texts they have read and supporting their viewpoint with illustrative examples. Many produce very competent, analytical writing, showing mature understanding, as well as a personal response to literature. Many in the lower sets in Years 10 and 11, including a few with special educational needs, use ICT effectively to improve the length and quality of their writing.

206. Nearly all pupils make good progress by age 14 and also by age 16 because they respond well, with a high degree of motivation, to the thorough and well-planned teaching. Boys come to the school wanting to do well and are prepared to work hard and teachers build on this. Very good progress was seen in a Year 8 lesson based on the class reader *Skellig*. Lively teaching, including the effective use of humour, encouraged a good degree of participation, whilst the pace of the question and answer sessions stimulated thinking and enabled most to recognise the subtleties of language used in the novel. By the end of Year 11, most have made very good progress,

helped by very good teaching, including detailed marking. Many improve by persevering with the drafting of lengthy essays; others learn from the opportunity to discuss ideas in small groups.

207. There was very good learning as a result of very good teaching in nearly half the lessons observed. When the teaching is very good, learning is well managed and the teacher's enthusiasm and fast pace helps to sustain concentration and application. Effective questioning is a further feature of the very good teaching in English. In a very successful Year 10 lesson, the very good use of questions and the thoughtful responses enabled nearly all to achieve a considerable depth of understanding about the character of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. In very good lessons, high expectations result in challenging but achievable demands that produce good levels of critical understanding. Homework is well used to develop research skills and extend thinking around a text or topic.
208. Very occasionally unsatisfactory classroom management results in noisy behaviour that interferes with learning. Occasionally the planning of work does not take sufficient account of the differing capabilities in the class. In a few lessons the work is not sufficiently demanding for the more able.
209. Leadership and management are good. There is a strong commitment to improve and the work of the department clearly reflects the school's aims, recognising that work in English plays a major part in promoting personal development. The procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching are sound.
210. Since the last inspection, improved teaching methods encourage more active participation in lessons. There is now a more formal system for assessing speaking and listening and there are more opportunities in lessons for developing these skills. Standards have improved. The department recognises, however, that there has only been limited progress in developing a coherent curriculum plan for Years 7-9. Schemes of work that take account of differing learning needs have still to be completed.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Results in national tests at age 14 and at GCSE at age 16 are consistently in the top 5 per cent nationally with a rising trend.
- Teaching is very good because high expectations and good relationships encourage all to do their very best.
- Good leadership and management encourage the sharing of ideas and expertise within the department.

Areas for improvement

- The cultural and multicultural aspects of mathematics.
- Opportunities to work co-operatively in small groups.
- The monitoring of the standards and progress of different groups of boys.

211. Standards on entry to the school are well above average. Standards in mathematics are well above the national average.
212. Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds in 2000 were in the top 5 per cent nationally. All reached Level 5 and above, set against a national figure of almost two-thirds. Ninety per cent reached Level 7, a standard four years ahead of the national

expectation. In comparison with similar schools, the results are above average. The trend over the last three years, in terms of the average National Curriculum points score, has been one of consistently rising standards, slightly exceeding the national rate of improvement. Standards in mathematics over the last three years have been above those in English and science. Figures for the 2001 tests are not yet verified, but they mirror those above.

213. The proportion at age 16 achieving A* to C grades in the 2000 GCSE examination was 98 per cent; well above the national average of 47 per cent. These figures are average for those gained by other grammar schools. The range of attainment on entry to the school is broader than in most grammar schools. These results therefore represent a good achievement.
214. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades A* or A was 35 per cent, greater than the corresponding national proportion of 9 per cent. This shows that the most able achieve well.
215. Over the last three years, standards at GCSE have risen. Relative performance in the year 2000 GCSE examinations was better in mathematics than in either English or science. The high standards attained at GCSE can be explained by well above average standards on entry to the school, coupled with good progress at age 16 years.
216. The standard of work seen during the inspection matched those indicated in national tests and GCSE at the ages of 14 and 16 years.
217. A statistical analysis of nationally recognised tests shows very good progress at age 14 years. This may be attributed to a firm grasp of basic number and algebraic concepts. At age 14, the less able solve simultaneous equations, usually showing their working in a clear, systematic manner. The more able work with positive and negative indices, but sometimes make the odd slip in mental calculations. The most able initially find work involving algebraic fractions a challenge, but are soon able to use them in the solution of complicated equations. All handle confidently whole numbers, fractions and decimals. They carry out mathematical investigations, make conjectures and identify patterns.
218. Progress at age 16 is very good. Many bring together and use the various mathematical topics learnt previously. At age 16, the less able deal confidently with problems involving compound interest calculations. They are sometimes careless in their use of the correct units. The more able make the occasional error when simplifying algebraic expressions involving negative numbers, but solve quadratic equations using a variety of methods. The most able confidently manipulate complicated formulae, showing their working in a clear and logical way. The most able group take GCSE mathematics in the first term of Year 11. This 'express' group then concentrates on developing algebraic skills in preparation for mathematically based subjects in the sixth form. This has proved to be a useful and valued arrangement.

219. The analysis of standardised tests and work shows that those with special educational needs make very good progress between the ages of 14 and 16. This is because teachers are aware of the particular educational special needs and provide extra support when appropriate.
220. ICT is well used to improve the quality of learning; for example, graphing software is used to demonstrate the effect on graphs of varying certain parameters. This helps to improve the quality of conjectures when interpreting graphs. Speaking and listening skills are developed on an 'ad hoc' basis. Boys are often asked to explain how they arrived at their answers or why they used a particular method, with an emphasis on using the correct mathematical language. Great attention is also paid to the introduction of new mathematical vocabulary, but there is no formal literacy policy within the subject. The quality of written work is good.
221. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Investigative work has a higher profile and is supported by suggestions in the department's scheme of work. There have been improvements in assessment procedures; predicted National Curriculum Levels and GCSE grades are used to track individual's progress. However, the monitoring of the progress of particular groups is unsatisfactory. The sharing of good practice has increased and become a feature of departmental meetings.
222. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It was good or better in more than 70 per cent of lessons seen. It was never less than satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. There is no significant difference between the qualities of teaching in mathematics at each of the key stages. Satisfactory lessons could become good lessons with an increase in pace and challenge. Nearly all are planned well and now contain an appropriate range of tasks, including whole-class activities in which questions are well used to test and develop understanding. The resultant challenge and pace encourages a high level of participation. Nearly all develop confidently a well argued response to questions. Consequently, many make very good progress. There are good opportunities to work individually or in pairs but less evidence of work in larger groups.
223. Leadership and management are good. Teamwork is good. There is a good emphasis on raising achievement further. There are good procedures for monitoring progress. The information gained from assessments is used both to place individuals accurately in teaching groups and to inform the planning of lessons and the curriculum as a whole. Examination results are analysed in detail and effective action is taken to improve standards.

SCIENCE

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Results in national tests at age 14 are consistently in the top 5 per cent nationally.
- Standards are well above national expectations at age 14 years.
- Progress is good at age 14 years.
- A very good level of subject knowledge and good support for individuals contribute to the overall good teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Progress between the ages of 14 and 16 years.
- The match of work to the capability of different groups.
- The use of ICT to improve further the quality of learning.
- The use of assessment to inform individuals of how they might improve.

224. Since the last inspection, standards in science have improved, particularly in the last year. The overall quality of teaching has improved and is now good. The matching of work to meet individual needs is still unsatisfactory and many still have too few opportunities to engage in discussion during lessons.

225. Standards at age 14, in the national tests of 2000, were in the top 5 per cent nationally. All gained at least Level 5. The percentage gaining Level 6 or above was well above the national average, but below the average in similar grammar schools. This reflects a range of attainment on entry to the school that is broader than in many grammar schools. The average level reached was well below that in grammar schools in 2000, but has risen in 2001. Over the previous three years, results have been steady. In 2000, the average level was below that in English and significantly below in mathematics. In 2001 the performance in science, in comparison with mathematics was still lower, but improved over the previous year. GCSE results in biology, chemistry and physics were below the national average in 2000. In all three subjects, the percentage of higher grades A*/A, was well below average. Over the past few years, results have fluctuated, but in 2001 they have improved.

226. In the work seen at age 14, standards are well above those expected nationally. There is a high level of skill in scientific enquiry; for example, in predicting the effect of light intensity and explaining photosynthesis. The depth of understanding of essential concepts is very good in all three areas of study in the National Curriculum, life processes, materials, and physical processes.

227. In the work seen at age 16, the standard of experimental technique, use of quantitative analysis of data and knowledge and understanding of difficult concepts, such as chemical bonding, is in-line with that to be expected in a grammar school. Nearly all make good progress at age 16 years. Achievement is good. The most able make satisfactory progress. Progress is good when the level of challenge in the teaching fully matches the boys' capability.

228. The good progress, overall, is partly because attitudes to the sciences are very positive and this has a marked effect on motivation. Behaviour is very good. Their high level of maturity has a significant impact on learning. The frequent opportunities for practical investigation in the laboratories afford good development of personal skills such as effective collaboration and teamwork. When teaching is occasionally less stimulating in content or style, some lose interest, but are not disruptive.

229. Teaching and learning in science are good. During the inspection, three-fifths of lessons were judged good or very good and the remainder were at least satisfactory.

The quality of learning is very good when very good subject knowledge is used effectively to add depth and detail to discussion. High expectations ensure motivation towards the targets in examinations. Learning is made more interesting and enjoyable when resources are well used to demonstrate or support experimental work. Homework is used well to extend learning and all have appropriate textbooks to ensure that independent study skills are developed. The few who have special educational needs make good progress because they receive a good level of individual support.

230. Numeracy skills are well used in all three sciences; for example, in algebraic calculations, use of formulae and in the precise analysis of graphs. Consequently, many develop the necessary skills of calculation that are required for the highest examination grades.
231. Marking of work is regular and gives an indication of attainment and quality, but it does not indicate well enough how individuals might improve their work. There is insufficient reference in marking and assessment to levels of the National Curriculum and GCSE grade criteria. ICT is not used enough in science, mainly due to a lack of computer hardware.
232. Leadership and management of the three departments of biology, chemistry and physics, are satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Schemes of work are adequately developed but do not sufficiently address the match of tasks to different capabilities. Assessment is carried out regularly to monitor progress against targets. The data is used insufficiently in the review of curriculum planning. The three science subjects are largely managed separately. This results in some inefficiencies.

ART AND DESIGN

The quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Excellent leadership and management of art.
- Very good standards and progress at ages 14 and 16 years.
- Very high expectations in the very good teaching.
- The quality and use of ongoing assessment.

Areas for improvement

- The introduction, in a few lessons, contains too much information for pupils to remember at once.

233. Standards in art and design are well above those expected nationally at ages 14 and 16 years. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were well below the level expected nationally.
234. This year, as a result of using incorrect, external information the full range of levels was not used to assess the standards at age 14 years. This meant the number achieving Level 7+ was not an accurate reflection of their actual ability.
235. The GCSE results at age 16 are above results nationally and have consistently improved since the last inspection, especially in the last three years. Progress at age 16 is very good. The observation of work during the inspection confirmed this.
236. Standards are well above those expected nationally at age 14 because nearly all can analyse images and develop and explore ideas with increased independence across a

broad range of media. Drawing skills are very good, developed from a below average level on entry to the school. Nearly all enjoy art very much and take responsibility for their work seriously. Across all years there are opportunities to use the numeracy skills of proportion, perspective and spatial awareness to recognise pattern and symmetry in their work. Many of these skills were evident in a lesson to produce motif designs in press print. This involved experimentation with several colour overlays, using single and multiple prints.

237. Most make very good progress from the levels assessed on entry to the school. Their progress is carefully monitored using detailed assessments and in every lesson each individual knows what they are expected to do and how well they are achieving. Some, whose independent learning skills are high, have the opportunity to carry out negotiated tasks in Year 9.
238. The standards at age 16 are well above those expected nationally because those who choose to continue to study art, build on the knowledge and skills they have gained previously to produce high quality work across a wide range of media in two- and three-dimensional forms. They have a very good knowledge of artists and their works and use it selectively to further inform their own styles and compositions.
239. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is much improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Expectations are high and methods consistently very good. Consequently, all learn very effectively. The rigorous marking and assessments enable each individual to know exactly what is expected. All are very well supported in their learning because there is always a quick and skilful response to changes in mood, ebbing of interest or lapses in concentration. Resources, praise and positive language are used very well, especially when individuals encounter difficulties. Demonstrations of new skills and techniques are very well prepared but occasionally they can be less effective if they are too long.
240. Nearly all learn well because they respond very well to the inspirational and infectious enthusiastic teaching that sets high standards. When necessary, they will freely ask for support and advice, sharing ideas with others. There is a good pace to their work and because they are encouraged to take responsibility and make decisions on how to develop and refine it, they take pride in what they are doing
241. Leadership and management are excellent. Great strides in the improvement of provision and the raising of standards have been made since the last inspection. The curriculum is reviewed regularly to refine and improve it further. High standards are promoted and pupils' work is celebrated throughout the school. Good use is made of ICT resources, including the use of CD-ROMS and the Internet as a source of collecting information, along with more traditional methods such as books, catalogues and gallery visits.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Opportunities to learn skills in the use of different materials.
- Motivation in Year 7 is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough because graphic skills and understanding of technological knowledge are not high enough.
- The teaching of the GCSE courses because it lacks sufficient attention to detail to support progress.
- The opportunities to use ICT.

242. Standardised test results at age 11 are well above average but there is no formal assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills in design and technology.
243. The statutory teacher assessments in 2000 at age 14, were above average, with most pupils at Levels 6 and 7. The GCSE results in 2000 were well above the national average with a high proportion of A and B grades. As at the last inspection, external examination results show the proportion of pupils obtaining grades A*/A was well below the average for selective schools.
244. One reason for the difference in standards found in the GCSE results in 2000 and the work seen during the inspection is that expectations and the level of challenge in the lessons observed were not high. Most have had a number of different teachers in the design and technology department in recent times.
245. Standards at age 14 are broadly in-line with those expected nationally. The most able pupils work very independently and produce many design ideas that they develop, modify and evaluate well. However, they are able of attaining even higher standards and producing more work of a very good standard in the time that is available to them.
246. The able and less able pupils do not produce enough design ideas nor develop these ideas to a high enough standard. They have unsatisfactory drawing skills and standards have not improved since the last inspection.
247. All, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress by the age of 14 years. The graphic skills of many are unsatisfactory and this lowers the standards of their coursework. A minority in Year 9 have poor understanding of the skills and knowledge of technology; for example, in a lesson on producing an initial design and paper model for an automata, a number produced very few ideas and made little effort to research from books. With help, those whose skills are broadly average or below can produce good work, but their progress is slower because their work often displays drawings that are ill-proportioned and not well labelled.
248. All can follow and produce a design brief well. The most able are very independent, producing a good range of ideas, with good analysis of existing products in their designs. They demonstrated these skills well when working on their candleholder and automata projects.
249. The work seen at age 16 was below the standards expected nationally. Whilst examination results have improved greatly, classroom observation shows a picture similar to that of the last inspection with underachievement at age 16 years. This is mainly due to weaknesses in understanding and application of technology skills and knowledge.

250. In their coursework, the most able design and produce graphical work of a good standard to present their own individual ideas. They research well and each section of coursework is developed with some use of ICT, to present questionnaires and pie or bar charts to illustrate results.
251. At age 16, approximately one-third evaluate their work well. The least able can follow the design criteria in the coursework but their achievement is unsatisfactory because presentation skills are unsatisfactory and their work lacks the required depth and rigour. In a graphic products lesson on producing a final design solution for GCSE coursework, most had left their folders at home. A number of them had little knowledge of how they were progressing and there was no sense of urgency about the work.
252. Despite a period of satisfactory improvement after the last inspection, progress has slowed more recently as a result of temporary arrangements in the leadership of the subject. Examination results have improved. There has been some development in the use of ICT, but it is used infrequently.
253. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Two-thirds of the teaching seen in Years 7, 8 and 9 was good; no teaching of a good quality was seen in Years 10 and 11. At the time of the previous inspection teaching was satisfactory and often good.
254. Teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory. Good planning results in a good level of response in the best lessons. Those in Year 7 are particularly well motivated and concentrate well when; for example, learning about different metals for coat hooks. Good teamwork in this well managed lesson ensured a lively lesson and a good level of understanding about materials.
255. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 was unsatisfactory because the work was insufficiently rigorous and challenging. There was no sense of urgency in the lessons seen. There is good technical support that plays a valuable part in ensuring that resources are readily available. Some work is well displayed to stimulate thought on the topics that are undertaken, including practical items from resistant materials and graphics.
256. The temporary arrangements for the leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. Teacher expectations are not high enough or the work sufficiently challenging to include the needs of the more able boys. The monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision for geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards are high. GCSE results are above average.
- Progress is very good at age 16 years.
- Very good teaching encourages accuracy and attention to detail.

Areas for improvement

- Clearer explanations of lesson objectives.
- The availability of resources when lessons are not taught in specialist rooms.

257. The statutory teacher assessments reported at age 14 are well above average. Progress at age 14 is very good. The standards of work seen confirm this progress. They are well above those that pupils are expected nationally to reach at age 14 years. Nearly all describe and explain geographical processes in detail. The more able show understanding of the ways in which human and physical processes inter-relate.

258. GCSE results are above the national average. Progress at age 16 is good. Standards in work seen confirms this progress. Most at age 16 explain complex interactions between human and physical processes. The most able use a wide range of geographical factors to explain and predict change in the characteristics of places over time. GCSE results were lower in 2001, reflecting lower standards of prior attainment. Action has been taken by the department to redress this.

259. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In many lessons seen during the inspection it was very good. Most boys acquire new knowledge and skills and apply these to develop understanding of new concepts. Good subject knowledge and high expectations are features of the very good teaching. Learning is well paced and good planning covers fully the National Curriculum requirements within a timetable allocation that is slightly below the median nationally. The response in lessons is frequently enthusiastic; for example, in Year 10 when applying knowledge of the human and physical geography of the UK to an understanding of farming as a system with various inputs, processes and outputs. The management of behaviour is good. The good monitoring of progress helps teachers to set targets. Assessments are used to inform planning of both short and long-term teaching objectives. As a result, progress is good. Individuals are well supported in lessons so that difficulties are resolved quickly and high expectations set. There is a good level of expertise in the use of ICT, which is well used to improve the quality of learning.

260. Leadership and management are good. There are regular departmental meetings. Teaching is monitored as part of performance management. The department offers support to all pupils at lunch-times and after school through teachers being available to help and advise on problems with homework or aspects of classwork. Members of the department also contribute to the extra-curricular life of the school.

HISTORY

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results are amongst the best in the school for the second year running and in-line with those for all selective schools.
- Teaching is consistently good in all years and often very good. Teachers use a stimulating range of methods to promote historical thinking.
- Historical skills are very good, in particular the explanation of causes and consequences and the use of evidence to support conclusions.
- Good leadership has identified where there is still capacity for improvement and has put in place good strategies to achieve it.

Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work need to be more detailed.
- Match learning materials to individual needs.
- The criteria for assessing standards in the National Curriculum need to be communicated more explicitly.

261. Standards in history are high. The statutory teacher assessments in 2000 show two-thirds of pupils are working above the nationally expected level at age 14 years. In the GCSE history examinations in 2000, the proportion gaining grades A*-C was very high compared with the national average for all schools and close to that for grammar schools. These results represent a good level of achievement. The results in 2001 are even higher, nearly all achieving grades A*-C and over one-third A*-A.

262. In work seen during the inspection, standards at age 14 are well above those expected nationally. This is evident in the quality of their written work on aspects of the Industrial Revolution. Most produce well-argued essays explaining the reasons for the success of Abraham Darby's ironworks at Coal Brookdale and comparing the contribution of Matthew Boulton and James Watt to the success of the Soho works.

263. At age 14, most adopt a critical approach to historical sources. In lessons on child labour in the early factories, many classify sources to support different interpretations of what conditions were like. They assess their reliability and reach conclusions on the balance of the evidence available. The very good level of intellectual challenge in lessons emphasises key questions. Consequently, progress and achievement are good. The new system of regular assessment provides better information on how to improve their history skills even further. The criteria for assessing standards in the National Curriculum need to be made more explicit.

264. At age 16, standards are well above those that are expected nationally. GCSE courses start in the second half of the summer term in Year 9. This means that those who choose history get off to a flying start, although it does limit the time that others spend on the history of the twentieth century.

265. Achievement at GCSE is very good. Nearly all make very good progress to reach high levels of knowledge and understanding by age 16 years. Note taking is detailed and accurate. The standard of logical analysis in essays is high. Arguments are well organised and conclusions well founded. Historical sources are very well analysed. In a lesson in Year 11 on the causes of the Holocaust, boys evaluated evidence for opposing theories of the extent to which the genocide was deliberately planned. High expectations and the careful monitoring of progress through regular testing help to achieve these high standards.

266. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. GCSE results are higher because teaching provides more intellectual challenge to develop analytical and interpretative skills. As a result more now think for themselves. The preparation for examinations is more systematic, including a regular lunch-time club that provides additional support. The outline schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 now include all the units of study required by the revised National Curriculum and, this year, contain plans for using ICT to support learning.
267. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in Years 10 and 11. In all lessons observed, teaching and learning were good, and in one-third of them they were very good. The very effective conclusion to many lessons results in a high level of understanding. In the good teaching, detailed lesson planning around key questions provides good opportunities to investigate through a series of challenging and interesting activities. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, making full use of single periods. The quality of learning is good because tasks are made progressively more difficult, moving from comprehension of source material to evaluating its usefulness and reliability. In some lessons, the less able find some of the source material difficult to understand. They would benefit from alternative tasks that are better matched to their individual needs. Skilful questioning and opportunities for discussion in pairs and small groups promote a high level of involvement in lessons, which increases understanding. Behaviour is managed well, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Homework is used well to extend learning and encourage independent research.
268. Leadership and management are good, placing emphasis on improving teaching and learning through self-review. The leadership of the department has changed recently, providing opportunity for rigorous review. This is being achieved through professional teamwork, with a sharp focus on sharing ideas that will benefit both teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Standards at ages 14 and 16 are above those expected nationally.
- Progress at age 16 is good because the GCSE lessons are very well planned.
- There is an enthusiastic response to teaching that provides a good level of challenge.
- There is a high level of commitment and expectation in leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Timetabled opportunities to develop ICT skills between the ages of 11 and 14 years.
- Provision for computer aided design (CAD) and computer aided manufacturing (CAM).
- Planned opportunities to develop ICT skills in each subject of the National Curriculum.

269. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection. Amongst them, new computer facilities have been established in the design centre. New courses have led to increasing numbers choosing to follow examination courses. The level of specialist teaching knowledge is good because there has been good provision for professional development.
270. At age 14, nearly all pupils can successfully complete a good range of challenging work. When they start at the school at the age of 11 their previous experience and level of skills in ICT are varied. The statutory teacher assessments at age 14,

reported in 2000, were well above average with over three-quarters well above average (Level 7).

271. GCSE results in 2000 were well above the national average, with almost three-quarters obtaining grades A*-C, compared with national average of just over one-half. Almost one-quarter obtained A*/A. Results in 2001 were broadly similar. Since 1998 there has been an improvement in results, with more candidates entered for the GCSE courses.
272. Standards at age 14 are good. Most successfully complete a good range of challenging work. There were no lessons for Year 9 during the inspection. A sampling of a good range of work shows that pupils use word processing to compose and present letters well, using confidently the mail merge facility.
273. The most able create good quality databases. Images from clipart appear in the individually composed advertisement for a newspaper delivery person. The most able evaluate their work in detail.
274. Nearly all pupils produce ICT work of a high standard. A small proportion of the least able present unsatisfactory evaluations.
275. Achievement at age 14 is good. Only in Year 7 are ICT lessons timetabled. Motivation is high. Many are highly independent learners and work together in their own time to acquire new skills. Many have computers at home. This helps them to make good progress.
276. Standards at age 16 in the examination courses are above those expected nationally. Achievement and progress are good. At age 16, many use their increasing ICT skills to tackle more complex assignments. The GCSE coursework shows good, individual research, a good level of skill and good presentation.
277. The most able are particularly good at analysing and evaluating their coursework. Files show good coverage of coursework criteria and confident use of a range of software packages, including databases, mail merge and spreadsheets. High standards of literacy and oracy are reflected in the high quality of many assignments.
278. The quality of teaching in timetabled lessons is good. A good level of subject knowledge results in clear explanations, which produce a good level of understanding. The detailed planning provides a good degree of challenge for all. A good pace is usually maintained throughout lessons, with a suitable balance of time for instruction and opportunities to work independently. In a Year 11 lesson on databases, there was good use made of technical language, such as 'search criteria', 'verification' and 'validation'. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Individual needs are well met.
279. In addition to teaching how to use computers, there is a statutory requirement to develop the use of ICT within each subject of the National Curriculum. Such provision is currently patchy and does not meet fully this requirement.
280. There are some good uses of ICT. In art it is very well used with opportunities to research, collect information and manipulate imported images. Good use is made of a range of hardware including a digital camera. Spreadsheets are used well in mathematics to develop further a knowledge and understanding of number and skills in its manipulation. In geography, a desktop publishing package is used to produce a high quality presentation on farming systems diagram. The Internet is used to research 1991 Census data to present information on ethnicity in various Birmingham wards. English folders show evidence of the use of ICT to produce documents such as travel brochures, a desktop publishing package, word processing and images. ICT

is also well used in history in Year 8 where a database is interrogated on the people of Rayner in Tudor times. The computer suite is used regularly in modern foreign languages to support good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding of language.

281. In other subjects, the use of ICT was not observed in lessons, or was it evident in work seen.
282. Leadership and management of the timetabled provision are good. The deployment of technical support is satisfactory. The ratio of computers to pupils and students is above the national average. Procedures to co-ordinate and monitor the development of ICT skills in each subject of the National Curriculum are unsatisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Results in German are well above the average for grammar schools.
- Very good teaching methods.
- A good range of languages.
- Very good levels of interest and motivation support good progress.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment of speaking and listening in Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Listening skills.

283. In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in GCSE French, is well above national average for all schools, but well below the selective schools' average. Results in 2001 show an improvement on the previous year. No national comparisons are currently available.
284. In German, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades is well above national average for all schools and above the selective schools' average. The 2001 results show a drop in the number of A*-C grades. The proportion gaining A*-C grades is consistently higher in German than in French. The proportion of A*-A grades is low for a grammar school but reflects the broader than usual range of attainment on entry.
285. Statutory teacher assessments in 2000 in French and German were well above average, with a high proportion reaching Level 6 or above, in languages the national comparison level in that year was Level 4. These high standards are confirmed in lessons seen and from the sampling of work.
286. In both languages the majority communicate confidently in oral tasks, using a good range of words, phrases and complete sentences. They use the language creatively in written work and the level of skills is good. A minority find listening exercises harder because they are less confident about what they should listen. Progress is good because lessons are well sequenced to enable all to achieve well. High standards are set from the start. A Year 7 group could already express opinions about school subjects. School vocabulary was reinforced by a song, which added enjoyment to the lesson. The challenge in Year 9 to check individual e-mail boxes later in the week was good.
287. At age 16, standards are higher than those expected nationally. A sound grasp of grammar and extensive range of vocabulary enables nearly all to work confidently and independently. An increasing understanding of a wide range of texts and the knowledge, understanding and skills to write accurately and at length to a variety of

audiences are strong features of these good standards. The use of writing frames has helped to raise the standards of written work. Very good teaching methods result in the enjoyable acquisition of difficult concepts. In a Year 10 German lesson, the forms of the past tense were taught very creatively, as rap verses were chanted enthusiastically. This drove home some very difficult grammar, but the way it was taught made it appear easy. In a Year 11 German lesson, very challenging grammatical features of commands were very well taught using communicative methods.

288. Italian is new to the curriculum but already the very positive impact is evident. High standards of work were seen in the beginners Year 10 lesson, where nearly all answered fluently and spontaneously and could ask questions of each other.
289. The quality of teaching is very good. In Years 7, 8 and 9, over one-half of the lessons were good or better. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen. All lessons in Years 10 and 11 were good or better. More than one-half were very good. Lessons are good as a result of clear objectives, brisk pace and a variety of activities. Expectations are high and very well communicated. The work is frequently challenging. Lessons are enjoyable and homework enables all to consolidate work learnt in class and do individual research.
290. Standards are above expectations and progress is good because fluency and pronunciation are emphasised and chorus repetition is taken seriously. As a result, most can speak to the teacher and each other in all three languages. Work in pairs and groups is well organised. Consequently, there is a good degree of self-discipline, perseverance and concentration in the acquisition of language. New grammar is taught in context, with opportunities to apply new learning. Reading materials are authentic and make language learning meaningful.
291. Whilst most understand the spoken language presented on audiotape in lessons, they would benefit from more examination technique practise. In French at GCSE level, some of the textbooks were out of date, in particular the reading and listening exercises.
292. Very occasionally; for example, in a Year 8 German lesson, a minority was inattentive. This slowed the progress of others despite the good planning and subject knowledge in the teaching. In the one Year 8 unsatisfactory German lesson, the class was inattentive and restless.
293. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strengths are in the audit of the department, the updating of schemes of work and resources and the good display that sets high standards. Regular monitoring of teaching is not fully in place and there is lack of formal assessment in some skills in Years 7, 8 and 9.
294. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Teaching methods are more varied, resulting in greater motivation and increased scope for more independent learning.

MUSIC

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching in all years.
- The increased provision of instrumental lessons, which has contributed towards raising standards in playing and performing skills in the classroom.

- The wide range and good quality of extra-curricular activities that supports the learning of the considerable number of boys who take part.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation is at present inadequate.
- The monitoring of teaching.
- Assessment procedures and target setting.

295. The majority of pupils enter the school at the age of 11 with limited knowledge of the elements of music. Those who play instruments enter with a satisfactory level of knowledge in playing, performing and theory. Standards at age 14 are above average. They are above the standards expected nationally at 16 years. In Year 7, in lessons seen, nearly all make very good progress and in Years 8 and 9, good progress. This is because of the quality of teaching and the many opportunities provided to broaden musical experience and understanding. Twenty per cent in Years 7 to 11 receive instrumental tuition. A small minority play more than one instrument.
296. Since the previous report, entries and results for GCSE have fluctuated in Years 10 and 11. In 2000, the proportion gaining A*-C grades was below average. It was average for grades A*-G. Results in 2001 show a significant improvement in the number gaining A*-C grades.
297. The quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is very good. In lessons seen, three-fifths of teaching was very good and two-fifths good. The management of learning is excellent with quick but quiet movement when changing activities during the lesson and no time is wasted. The very good demonstration of singing, playing and directing contributes to very good progress. Question and answer sessions and individual help ensure that all understand what is being taught and how they are to work through planned tasks. Activities to develop literacy skills, as well as those designed to give beneficial musical experiences, feature regularly in lessons; for example, in one Year 7 lesson, during the question and answer session, many made good gains in their knowledge of the subject vocabulary. The increased provision of ICT in the department is starting to widen opportunities to compose and arrange music but is not yet impacting on standards.
298. During practical activities there are limited opportunities to use their orchestral instruments because of the limits in space. All have equal access to opportunities offered both in lessons and extra activities, including the use of keyboards and percussion, in all lessons. In one Year 11 lesson, where the quality of teaching was satisfactory, many made overall less progress than expected because a small minority were walking around the room and interfering with the progress of others. In this lesson, there were missed opportunities to take responsibility for recording work.
299. The very good quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 has a positive effect on the quality of learning. Behaviour is very good and nearly all pupils listen carefully. Nearly all respond well to quick question and answer sessions and larger groups move quickly and quietly from one activity to another. They are offered a wide range of music and are enthusiastic about music from different cultures and times. Care is taken to choose some music that appeals to young people; for example, the Chamber Choir were singing the theme music from the television series, *The Vicar of Dibley*, a group of players were rehearsing popular rock music and chorus rehearsals had started for Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta, *Patience*, the forthcoming production with the local girls' school. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are developing their keyboard skills well. Close to one-third use both hands and can read and write notation. Others are given additional guidance and good progress is being made. Composition skills are improving. With the additional use of ICT, they are making good progress in using layers of sound,

which combine together to form pieces of music that show variety in shape, harmony, texture and dynamics. In Years 10 and 11, standards of playing and performing are well above national expectations. Listening skills are good. However, in some lessons, various musical sounds that travel from other classes and instrumental lessons interfere with concentration when analysing music and refining compositions.

300. Leadership and management are good. There is a good balance of skills that contribute towards successful teamwork. Departmental planning and assessment procedures are thorough. Fifteen peripatetic teachers support the department in many ways including supporting performances in school and in the community. The monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory. The department does not yet set individual targets or monitor the progress of different groups; for example, those having instrumental tuition.
301. The department has made good progress since the previous report. The provision and use for ICT has increased. Progress is now good overall, the quality of teaching has improved and there is an increased provision for instrumental lessons.
302. The accommodation remains unsatisfactory and the space available in the classroom is even more cramped than identified in the previous report because the new computers and keyboards have taken space. There are limited opportunities to refine work due to the lack of soundproofing. There is a lack of technical support in the department and teaching time is frequently taken up whilst adjusting and setting up equipment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching skills and the good planning of lessons.
- Excellent leadership and management that deploys teaching skills very well.
- Good relationships resulting in lessons that move with pace and purpose.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in gymnastics at age 14 years.
- Assessment procedures to be linked more explicitly to the standards described in the National Curriculum.
- External accreditation of standards at age 16 years.

303. At age 14, a majority reach very good standards in rugby. Most have a very good understanding of the essential skills, rules and tactics. They pass, tackle and operate the scrum effectively, playing well in competitive situations. This is mainly because nearly all respond well to the very good level of challenge and high expectations that characterise the teaching. The majority swim competently and perform the major strokes well. There are very few non-swimmers. In basketball, skills are in-line with those expected nationally by age 14 years. Skills in gymnastics are below national expectations because many do not bear body weight on their arms, either in movements or balances, or construct sequences of movements.
304. There is no GCSE course in physical education. By the end of Year 11, nearly all pupils have good practical skills in rugby. These are above the standards expected nationally. Many work the ball extremely well both in the scrum and along the line, largely because expectations are high and technical skills are very well taught. In health-related exercise all show interest, making considerable and sustained physical efforts and a minority in Year 11 score very highly on bleep tests, showing high levels

of fitness. Most have an understanding about the effects of exercise on the cardiovascular system. A large majority show technical improvement in badminton. They have the necessary repertoire of strokes to maintain good rallies and are able to select strokes appropriately to meet the demands of competition.

305. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the main school. Specialist knowledge and skills are good. These quickly gain respect and foster an enthusiastic response in many lessons. Consequently, progress is good. In teaching gymnastics, there need to be more opportunities in lessons for individuals to plan and perform their own work and extend their repertoires of movements and balances, particularly those which require body weight to be taken on arms.
306. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The timetabling of lessons is much improved. During the previous inspection most areas specified as needing attention have been addressed. The curriculum has better balance and less emphasis on rugby.
307. A new assessment system, recently introduced and networked, aims to promote the evaluation of individual performance against national standards. It is necessary, however, to publish national performance criteria so that all may more easily set and aspire to their own individual attainment targets.
308. Leadership and management are excellent. There is very good use of ICT for administration and the creation of printed resources. The curriculum is balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum although a GCSE course would enhance the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Accommodation is very good. The large, new sports hall has greatly enhanced facilities to provide a more balanced curriculum. Playing fields are of a very good standard with a very well maintained cricket square. Extra-curricular provision is good, particularly in games and is planned in fine detail. It caters well for boys who are gifted and talented in sport. Many play for the numerous representative teams in major games and this undoubtedly helps to raise standards. Rugby and cricket are particularly strong. During last year there was a rugby tour of Canada and this year there is to be one to Australia. Many adults give willingly of their time to support this programme.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Strengths

- The very good quality of teaching has made a significant contribution towards the raising of standards in all years.
- Boys are well motivated by the very good specialist knowledge of the teaching.

Areas for improvement

- The match of schemes of work and assessment procedures to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- The use of artefacts in lessons.
- The use of ICT to improve further the quality of learning.

309. Standards at age 14 are above the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The majority have a good knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of religion, the place of Christianity and other principal religions in the country and how their lives are shaped by their beliefs. They have a very good understanding of religious language, symbols and ideas. Skills in applying religious insights to their own experience and to that of others are particularly well developed.
310. In the 2000 GCSE short course examination, three-quarters gained A*–C grades and all gained A*–G. In one Year 11 lesson seen, a significant minority of pupils studying the GCSE short course were working at levels beyond this course.
311. In Years 7 to 9, all pupils make good progress. A significant minority make very good gains in all years. The majority of Year 11 are making good progress towards their GCSE short course examination. In one lesson seen, they had researched the main aspects of five major religions and presented their findings, in a group, to the class. Many spoke well and their presentations were well organised and informative for other groups who took notes. Standards in this lesson were above what is expected at age 16 years.
312. The quality of teaching is very good. Excellent teaching was observed in two lessons. This challenges and inspires a deeper understanding of religions. Consequently, nearly all pupils make good progress. Questions are very well used to extend understanding and encourage curiosity; for example, in a Year 7 lesson, a box was placed on each table with an object inside. After all had guessed what they thought each object was, the lesson went on to show how and why people see things differently.
313. Marking is good, providing a clear indication of how work might be improved. Homework is set regularly. The majority respond well in lessons to opportunities to speak, debate and use extended writing and poetry to express themselves. When the resources are available, good use is made of ICT for research. In one Year 9 lesson these resources contributed to good work on 'Death and Attitudes to Death'. In this lesson there was good progress in researching and editing information on Christian and Moslem attitudes towards death. A variety of work was produced including writing, illustrations and booklets.
314. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Standards are higher at age 14 years. The quality of teaching is now good. Resources, including the opportunities to use ICT, are insufficient to meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
315. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The level of specialist teaching is good and well deployed. The new leadership has started the revision of schemes of work and assessment procedures.

OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

LATIN

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- GCSE results in 2000 were above the national average.
- Standards are above those expected nationally and achievement is good.
- Good teaching promotes a good knowledge of grammar.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to improve further the quality of learning.

316. Standards are good. The subject is optional from Year 10 onwards and there is no requirement for reported assessment at age 14 years.
317. GCSE results at age 16 have been consistently above average since 1998. In 2000, as in recent years, all were graded and the provisional results for 2001 show this trend continuing. In this 'minority subject', the number of candidates is good. Achievement is good at the ages of 14 and 16 because good teaching results in good knowledge and understanding of basic grammar and a growing vocabulary; for example, many in a Year 8 lesson handled the use of 'posse' well and in Year 11, most had a good understanding of the use of the ablative absolute.
318. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The quality of learning at age 14 is now good, with many keen to participate in the lessons. Tasks are more closely matched to individual needs. There are clearer links between the language and Roman life, with good emphasis also on derivations in English. A good example of this was seen in a Year 9 lesson, where work on how the Romans would use prepositions such as 'prae', led to an appreciation of the link with 'prevent'.
319. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a very good level of specialist teaching in Years 9, 10 and 11. There is a little non-specialist teaching in Year 8. Lessons in all years are well planned and securely based on good subject knowledge. Examination techniques are well taught in Year 11. Expectations are high and skilful use of questions presents a good degree of challenge. The pace of learning is good because a wide variety of activities, including quick recall vocabulary tests in most lessons, consolidates learning well. Many score full marks in short tests because the teaching is very thorough. All remain on task throughout the lessons because their learning is well managed. A good example of the frequently enthusiastic response was seen in a Year 7 lesson, where the creation of an impressive wall display of Greek vases showed a good knowledge and understanding of design in the classical world.
320. The provision for those with special educational needs in Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory. Their progress is satisfactory. Homework arrangements, often involving the consolidation of classroom learning, are satisfactory.
321. Attitudes towards Latin are very good. Nearly all work with good interest, making many appropriate contributions. In lessons, all are well behaved and there are good levels of concentration.
322. Leadership and management are good. Communication and co-ordination within the small department are good. There has been a very recent change in the leadership.

There is a satisfactory range of resources but the use of ICT to enrich learning is unsatisfactory.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Strengths

- Standards are above those expected nationally at ages 14 and 16 because concepts are well taught.
- Good teaching in the Year 9 course provides a good foundation knowledge of economics and business.

Areas for improvement

- Books contain rather a lot of notes.

323. Standards are above those expected nationally at age 14 because nearly all the boys contribute well orally during classwork, showing understanding of a range of economic concepts, including the scarcity of resources, choice and opportunity costs.

324. The 2000 results in GCSE economics were broadly average. The 2001 results in economics are above average and an improvement on 2000.

325. The quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching in Year 9. Good specialist knowledge underpins discussion and presents a good level of challenge. Consequently, progress is good. Lessons are very well planned and there is good use made of activities to apply and extend learning. This was seen in the Year 10 lesson when the notion of demand and supply schedules was reviewed.

326. The strongest features in the teaching are good knowledge and understanding, high expectations and the provision of opportunities to work independently. As a result, the pace of learning is frequently good. Assessment procedures are good. Reports ensure an increasing awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in individual work.

327. Leadership and management are good. Results are carefully analysed. There is a strong commitment to improve standards still further.

PART E: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, 13 subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2000, the latest year for which national comparisons are available.

GCE AS level

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	17	53	63	6	17	1.1	1.6

GCE A level and AVCE courses

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Mathematics	39	95	89	49	45	6.9	6.0
Chemistry	42	79	89	24	42	4.1	5.9
Biology	43	88	88	19	34	4.4	5.3
Physics	28	64	88	4.6	5.7	4.6	5.7
Other sciences	10	80	89	10	31	3.6	5.2
Full Design and Technology	7	100	92	71	29	7.1	5.3
Business Studies	25	96	91	40	30	5.7	5.3
Home Economics	1	100	81	0	24	6.0	4.6
Economics	11	91	88	36	36	6.4	5.4
Sports/PE Studies	2	100	91	50	25	6.0	5.0
Vocational Studies	1	100	81	100	29	10.0	4.7
Art and Design	12	100	96	42	45	6.7	6.4
Music	2	100	93	0	35	5.0	5.7
Classical Studies	3	100	94	33	46	6.7	6.4
Geography	17	82	92	6	37	3.3	5.7
History	12	100	89	17	34	5.5	5.4
Religious Studies	7	100	91	0	35	4.3	5.6
Other Social Studies	43	79	88	19	35	4.6	5.3
English Literature	29	100	96	48	36	6.7	5.9
French	7	100	91	0	39	3.4	5.7
German	4	100	92	50	41	6.0	5.9
General Studies	241	92	85	38	28	5.7	4.9

SUBJECTS AND COURSES GROUPED IN CURRICULUM AREAS

SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

328. The inspection focus was physics, but biology, chemistry and geology were also sampled. In 2000, biology and chemistry A level results were below average. They improved in 2001. Results in geology were above average and students did as expected or better, compared with their previous GCSE examination results at age 16 years.
329. A small number of lessons were observed. The provision was at least good. Discussion with students and analysis of their written work indicates that progress is good as a result of the high level of staff expertise, good curriculum development and good teaching. In chemistry the development of the Salters approach, which emphasises application and relevance of the subject in industrial and medical fields, has led to greater enthusiasm and achievement.
330. Three lessons in geology were observed. They were all very good. In geology, the learning objectives were well matched to individual needs because the teachers made good use of their knowledge of the strengths of the students and where they were likely to have most difficulty.

PHYSICS

Overall, the quality of the provision is **good**.

Strengths

- GCE A level students achieve well, gaining results in 2001 that showed a marked improvement over the previous year.
- Students made good progress last year to achieve GCE AS results that were above expectation.
- There is a good understanding of essential concepts. Students use their mathematical skill well to solve problems or analyse experimental results.
- Teaching is good because lessons are well organised and include extensive practical work.
- Students have very positive attitudes and work well together.

Areas for improvement

- The degree of support and challenge for individual students does not sufficiently match their capability and ensure maximum achievement.
- ICT is not used enough to enhance the quality of learning.

331. In the GCE A level results in 2000, the percentage gaining a pass grade was below the national average, although the percentage of higher grades A and B was much closer to the average. Overall the mean point score was below average. In 2001 the mean point score increased significantly. The relatively few female students did not gain the higher grades to the same extent as male students. Most achieved reasonably well in relation to earlier predictions and GCSE. The AS results of 2001, were above expectations. Virtually all gained a pass grade and approximately one-half gained grades A or B. Many are continuing into the A2 phase of the course.

332. Students in Year 13 gain a secure knowledge of scientific principles; for example, in a practical lesson they were investigating the interference between coherent electromagnetic waves. They predicted carefully, from theoretical knowledge and used measurements well to calculate wavelength. Standards in Year 12 range from grades A - D. A significant proportion is working above expectation but a number are below. Students investigate and learn to analyse the balanced forces in mechanical systems, comparing with prediction from a prior knowledge. Several have difficulty assimilating the theoretical aspects of the topic, especially calculation. They do not regularly consider the contributory factors that affect the reliability of observations.
333. Teaching is good overall. Most students are learning well in most lessons. The features supporting this are the effective use of very good subject knowledge that challenges them to think scientifically and the overall level of support and guidance provided. This does not always match the capability of individual students and as a result some lack confidence and progress is limited. Similarly the degree of challenge to the most able is not always enough to ensure that key skills of problem solving skills are practised. Those who have completed a co-ordinated science GCSE, progress slowly at first as they do not have the same depth of knowledge.
334. Homework is used well to extend and advance the learning. Practical experience is a regular and significant aspect of the physics provision. Relationships are very good. As a result all collaborate well, support each other and yet have good skills of initiative and independence. The use of ICT to extend learning is unsatisfactory. Most written work is carefully organised and presented. Graphs are accurately drawn and analysed with considerable mathematical confidence. Many in Year 12 for example, investigate the free fall of a steel ball. They plot graphs after considering the appropriate axes and calculate gravitational acceleration using the mathematical formula.
335. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a strong commitment to improving standards. Examination data is very thoroughly analysed to establish trends, improve delivery and evaluate performance. Resources are well managed, although the availability of computer hardware is limited. Targets are set clearly and the department has a clear improvement plan that concentrates on raising achievement further.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision is very **good**.

Strengths

- A level results in recent years have been well above the national average.
- The students are well motivated and achieve very well because expectations are high.
- Good management enables the sharing of ideas and expertise.

Areas for improvement

- More opportunities for longer mathematical assignments.
- The procedures to monitor the progress of different groups of students.

336. The inspection covered AS, A2 (and, historically, A Level) mathematics. The AS involves three modules (pure mathematics, statistics and mechanics) and the A2 has two modules (pure mathematics and mechanics). A2 and AS Further mathematics are also offered to a small number of the most able students. The combination of AS and A2 modules chosen usually preclude, within the regulations, any sustained work in the form of coursework.
337. This is one of the most popular subjects. Numbers taking AS mathematics in Year 12 are about 70, with about 40 taking A2 in Year 13. The number of females taking mathematics is typically less than five. The number of students taking Further mathematics is normally less than ten.
338. Very few students fail to complete their courses. The department makes every effort to support those who may be experiencing difficulties.
339. Over the last few years standards for A level have risen from about average to well above average. It is one of the strongest subjects in the school. The results for 2001 are as yet unverified, but they indicate a slight 'dip'. The 2001 cohort is the first to study *Curriculum 2000*. This makes AS Level comparisons with previous years invalid. AS Level results have fluctuated over the last few years from below average in 1998 to well above average in 1999 and broadly average in 2000. Results in 2001 are similar to the previous year.
340. Statistical analysis of A level results in conjunction with their GCSE results two years previously show that they make good progress during the sixth form. Because the female entry for mathematics is so small it is impossible to draw any significant conclusions regarding gender differences in attainment. Lesson observation and conversations would seem to suggest that there is no friction between the genders. There is no objective analysis of the performance of minority ethnic results, but lesson observation and scrutiny of work suggests that these students attain as well as their peers. Further mathematics results, because of the small entry, are difficult to analyse, but over the last few years they have been above the national average or close to it, although this needs treating with some caution.
341. The standard of work seen during the inspection matched the well above average A level results. Students take a pride in their work, keeping well ordered and indexed notes that they make for themselves. Answers to questions, homework or classwork are clearly laid out. Graphs are drawn with care and clearly labelled, even sketch graphs being well executed.
342. Less able AS students sometimes encounter problems using calculus to find maximum values of functions, primarily as a result of simple algebraic slips. Some able students also make careless mistakes when simplifying algebraic expressions. The most able are totally confident and at home with complex algebraic expressions. Many make good progress because the correction of their work enables them to learn from their mistakes. When sketching complex trigonometric curves students checked their answers with the aid of a graphical calculator. The group, many of whom were not intending to take A2, persevered and helped each other with some quite challenging questions. All justified logically their sketch curves. In another AS group some confidently performed divisions involving algebraic expressions. Several admitted that they found the topic difficult but kept trying until they too were successful. By the end of the lesson all completed algebraic calculations with assurance.
343. The most able A2 students understand the concept of mathematical modelling and maintain comprehensive sets of notes. Most others use calculus to calculate areas

and volumes with satisfactory accuracy. The less able calculate probabilities, but sometimes find difficulty with conditional probability. In an A2 lesson on the proof of trigonometric relationships, students were challenged to construct a proof of their own. They found the task difficult but persevered because the use of penetrating questions enabled them to think their way to the answer. In another lesson on calculus, students worked in pairs to reconstruct a proof by rearranging statements on paper, an imaginative strategy that enlivened a necessarily pedestrian task through the good use of discussion.

344. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well prepared, with extension work available, some of it deriving from the scheme of work. Subject knowledge is very good. It is very well used to help students to overcome common misconceptions and avoid basic errors. Marking is diligent and very helpful. Full solutions are given and sometimes the work is annotated with helpful comments, including hints or suggestions for more efficient methods. Homework is set and marked regularly. There is a very good level of individual support in addition to the timetabled lessons.
345. Leadership and management are very good. The commitment to raise standards is high. Teachers are committed. Teamwork is very good, including opportunities to observe others' teaching methods. Knowledge and understanding of curricular and examination requirements are very good. Students' progress is carefully monitored by regular assessment.

ENGINEERING, DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING

346. No subject was inspected in detail in this area of the curriculum. Design and technology was sampled. Results were well above average in 2000 when nearly three-quarters of the seven candidates gained grades A-B. This dropped to less than one-fifth of the six candidates in 2001. Three lessons were sampled, in all of which the teaching was unsatisfactory.
347. Standards are unsatisfactory because, by the age of 18, students do not have sufficient knowledge of materials and product design to encourage innovation into their design thinking as a result of unsatisfactory teaching.

BUSINESS

348. The focus was on business studies but economics was also sampled. Examination results in economics were above average in 2000. Students did well considering their GCSE results. There was a further improvement in 2001 with two-thirds gaining grades A-B. Two lessons were observed. Both were good. Good subject knowledge and a good level of challenge enabled the students to think critically about economic principles and their application to the market.

BUSINESS STUDIES

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- The department provides a range of opportunities for students to build effectively on previous qualifications.
- Results are above average in both AS (Advanced Subsidiary) and A level courses in business studies and economics.
- Good course completion rates.
- Teaching is very good. Lessons are well planned and cater well for students' different needs.
- The most able are very good at thinking on their own about concepts and their application.

Areas for improvement:

- Students have insufficient access to computers.
- Students' files contain rather a lot of written notes.
- The literacy skills of the least able students.

349. The 2000 results for male students were well above average. Results have improved since 1999, showing further improvement in 2001. The range of learning opportunities is very good, offering pathways into higher education and business. Key skills are taught well.

350. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good subject knowledge is evident in both presentation and discussion; for example, in a question and answer session in Year 12 on the current economic and political situation and its effect on strategic planning in organisations. This deepens student understanding and knowledge. Technical language is well taught; for example, in a lesson with Year 13 students, dealing with critical path analysis. The planning of lessons is excellent with very good use of time and varied activities that often involve students in group work. Lessons generally have very good pace. This aids learning by underlining the expectation that individuals must apply intellectual effort to their work. There is a good understanding of individual needs. The marking of work is constructive. Assessment is well used to set targets. There is little use made of ICT.

351. Leadership and management are good. There is a good match of expertise to the courses offered. A daily meeting helps to share good practice. New courses have been introduced to meet the aspirations and needs of students. Accommodation for the sixth form is often cramped and in need of refurbishment. In spite of this, there is a good sense of direction about the future of the department's work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

352. The focus was on ICT. There was no opportunity to sample any other subject within this curriculum area. There are no A level results available as ICT and computing are relatively new courses.

Overall, the quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Nearly one-half of the students obtained grades A-B in the 2001 AS examination.
- Much of the teaching is good; teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- Students are very well motivated and work well.
- The most able students can create sophisticated solutions to problems.
- There is a good level of individual support in practical lessons.

Areas for improvement

- In Year 12 independent learning is not high amongst some students.
- The quality and quantity of work produced in lessons presently is inadequate for the level of the course.
- Some students in Year 12 are reluctant to participate in group/class discussion.
- Literacy skills affect the achievement of some students in this subject area, particularly Year 12.

353. Standards in the work sampled are in-line with national expectations. The most able produce work of a higher standard. Skills in the use of software are above expectations. Year 13 students use it very well to research and develop the analysis and design sections of their major project. Students in Year 12, working on a database assignment, created a data entry form and sorted fields into ascending order. A number of students needed support to establish a more advanced database than that attempted in Year 11. Year 13 students in the A level computing course confidently created complex systems to answer their own individual choices of problems. One devised a system that would help with his family's newsagent business when papers were cancelled. Other projects centred on a Chinese takeaway, video shop and on-line sales of products. These students were able to talk very knowledgeably about the use of ICT systems.

354. All show interest and enthusiasm. They work well together, helping each other in lessons and discussing aspects of the work. Some in Year 13 use e-mail to transfer work between home and school.

355. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The high level of subject knowledge enables students to make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Individual guidance and support within lessons is very good. Occasionally some are reluctant or lack confidence to contribute to discussion in class.

356. Leadership and management are good. Students' work is well monitored. The planning of the new courses is good.

HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

357. The focus was on physical education. The school provides no other courses in this area of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **very good**.

Strengths

- The quality, range and depth of the curriculum are excellent.
- Very good teaching on the A and A/S Level courses encourages students to learn independently.
- Excellent relationships in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The marking of work to identify areas for further improvement.
- Learning resources for examination courses.

358. The male and female students on A Level and A/S Level courses are making very good progress. The first group of A2 students will complete their course in 2002. Standards are well above those expected nationally. This is influenced strongly by the consistent emphasis of independent learning. Written work is very good. Oral skills are well developed and students articulate their points of view very clearly. ICT is well used to plan, research and produce projects.

359. Students participate well because the clear statement of learning objectives engages their interest and identifies the purpose of the lesson. Opinions are both volunteered and questioned. There are well-planned opportunities to use research skills to prepare presentations.

360. The quality of teaching is very good. High expectations present a very good level of challenge. As a result, written work, the responses to oral questioning and contributions to debates in lessons are all very good. There is a very good knowledge of technical terms in the physiological, anatomical and psychological sections of the course. The occasional excellent lesson is characterised by extremely thorough preparation, inspirational teaching methods and effective use of ICT. The response is excellent, with many students posing searching questions and offering opinions spontaneously and enthusiastically.

361. ICT is very well used for administration and the production of teaching materials. Students use it both to retrieve information and to present their work.

362. Leadership and management are excellent. The excellent curriculum is organised in fine detail and very well taught.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA

363. The focus was on art and music. There is no provision for other courses in this curriculum area.

ART

The overall quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Achievement is very good because students are well taught to make their own decisions in the development of their work.
- Very good assessment identifies very clearly the areas for further improvement.
- Leadership and management are excellent because the monitoring of provision is extremely thorough.

Areas for improvement

- None.

364. Standards in art and design are well above those expected nationally; a considerable improvement on the last inspection when standards were well below. In recent years the number of GCE A level candidates has risen. The proportion achieving a pass grade and the higher grades A* - B have both improved. The 2001 results were very good when compared with results in other subjects, especially the proportion of A grades. Comparison of students' results, with their very good achievements at GCSE indicates very good achievement. This year's AS level results contributed to this improving trend.
365. The observation of work during the inspection confirmed this. The standard in art for 18-year-olds is well above expectations because independent decision making skills and the knowledge and skills in art and craft are very good. Much of the work in Year 13 is conceptually adventurous, grounded in a very good understanding of how to undertake purposeful preparatory studies. Frequent gallery visits, which students make on their own and with the school, workshops with professional artists and life drawing studies at a local college extend opportunities to gain knowledge of arts and crafts beyond the classroom. Students successfully carry out extended studies into historical contextual backgrounds of artists and their work. They use the knowledge gained selectively in their own work. Key skills are good
366. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Improvements since the last inspection has been very good. Expectations are high and teaching methods are well chosen. Consequently the students learn very well. Marking and assessments are rigorous. As a result students know exactly what they are expected to learn, the standard required and how to improve in order to achieve even higher standards. Support and advice is well managed because individual needs are well identified. There is a great deal of mutual respect. This is particularly evident when areas for improvement are negotiated individually. At these times, the quality and range of art vocabulary is very high and the breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of art and craft is very much appreciated. Resources are very good, including the good use of ICT. Links with a local college and former students, who are following careers in art, provide useful perspectives on vocational routes.
367. Leadership and management are excellent. The planning of the curriculum is excellent with numerous opportunities for enrichment and very good display. The enthusiasm and expertise of the teaching team contribute greatly to the fulfilment of the aims and imaginative life of the school.

MUSIC

The quality of provision is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching.
- Standards.
- Relationships.

Areas for improvement

- Improvement in accommodation.
- Increase uptake.
- Further develop students' composition skills in order to raise standards even higher.

368. A level results in 2000 were below the national average. The proportion gaining A–B grades was below the national average, the proportion gaining A–E grades was above average. In 2001, the proportion of students gaining A-B grades improved. Standards of playing and performing are above those expected nationally. Standards of composition are lower in the students' view because they have insufficient opportunity to use ICT.

369. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Very good specialist knowledge and very good guidance to individuals about their performing are strong features that contribute to the good progress made

370. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There are strong, successful links with the consortium. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The opportunities for instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities have both increased.

HUMANITIES

371. The focus was on geography, history and Latin. Provision in other subjects including law and psychology, was not sampled because the local college at which they are studied was also being inspected at this time by another inspection team.

GEOGRAPHY

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Students are enthusiastic about the subject and the support they receive from their teachers.
- They appreciate the efforts their teachers make to provide them with opportunities to use ICT facilities in lessons to help with research.
- Their learning is also helped by the assistance geography teachers give outside lessons at lunch, or after school.

Area for improvement

- The provision of resources in non-specialist rooms.

372. The GCE A level results in 2000 were well below average. They improved significantly in 2001 with nearly one-half obtaining grades A-B.

373. Standards of work seen in Year 13 are well above expectations and broadly similar to the 2001 results. Achievement and progress are very good because lessons are well

planned and objectives well defined. ICT skills are good; for example, when using the Internet to extract population data. Good levels of understanding enable many to use this information to compare and contrast different electoral wards and test hypotheses about population structures and location within the city.

374. Students in Year 12 are only a few weeks into their course but are achieving as expected. Their knowledge of glaciation is satisfactory. They apply it well to the practical identification of glacial features in maps and photographs.
375. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The students respond enthusiastically to the very good level of expectation. Assessment is very well used to identify where standards might be further improved. This gains from the very good knowledge of the examination requirements. The provision of individual support is very good.
376. Tasks are well planned, including very helpful guidance at the outset. This combines an appropriate degree of support with opportunities to pursue independent study. The confident use of ICT, good research skills and a readiness to make very good use of the excellent library facilities all contribute to very good progress
377. Leadership and management are very good. The commitment to improvement and raising standards is high.

HISTORY

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Results at AS level in 2001 were good.
- Very good analytical skills enable Y13 students to debate issues, write discursively and evaluate historical evidence.
- Good teaching encourages very good participation in lessons.
- Good leadership and management make full use of assessment data to monitor sixth form progress.

Areas for improvement

- The proportion obtaining grades A-B at A level.
- Standards in coursework and the British History component of the AS course.

378. In 2000 and in the two previous years, A level results were broadly in-line with the national average. All students gained a pass grade but the proportion gaining grades A and B was below the national average. Male and female students gained similar results. In comparison with the other subjects they took, students did slightly better in history. This year's results were slightly lower and below the targets based on earlier GCSE results at age 16 years.
379. Standards in Year 13 are above those expected nationally. Progress is good on both the American and British History courses because there is good continuity with previous areas of study. This gives confidence to the students who make good use of the study skills previously acquired. There is good individual guidance provided for improving current grades.
380. In an excellent Year 13 lesson, students debated Martin Luther King's contribution to the Civil Rights Movement in America. They all demonstrated their command of the subject and the ability to communicate ideas eloquently in thoroughly prepared short

speeches, before challenging each other's statements with well-founded arguments. In their written work the most able need to make more reference to scholarship to achieve the highest grade. Less able students need to improve the relevance of their answers to the question under discussion, pursuing a balanced argument in sufficient detail and reaching considered conclusions.

381. Students in Year 12 have only just started their AS courses, most having achieved high grades at GCSE in the summer. They are satisfied with the induction they have received on the requirements of advanced study and their initial impressions are that the course is living up to their expectations. They are making good progress in researching information from books and the Internet, sharing their findings in class presentations on leading British political figures and aspects of American foreign policy in the twentieth century. In a wide-ranging essay on 'America Today', most demonstrated the ability to organise their material effectively to communicate some of the values and ideas that represent the USA. Some less able students concentrated too much on facts about America, without sufficient attention to what it stands for in today's world.
382. The quality of the teaching and learning is consistently good. There are some very good features, such as the active engagement of students in discussion on historical issues. This was highly effective in the excellent Year 13 debate on Martin Luther King, which achieved maximum student participation. Lessons are stimulating with a high level of intellectual challenge; for example, using a range of source material, including film, to present different interpretations of Britain in the thirties. There is an appropriate expectation that students read widely from the course book list and use the Internet. The regular use of teaching methods that allow active involvement of students in lessons, giving presentations and joining in discussion, is a style that many students have found beneficial to their learning. Teachers get on extremely well with their students and create a strong sense of joint collaboration on historical investigations. The quality of marking and feedback is also very good and the students' files are monitored on a regular basis.
383. Leadership and management are good. Good teamwork results in efficient and effective provision. There is good collaboration to establish consistent methods and expectations across the different areas of the course. Specific targets for improvement are in place. There is a newly established strategy to raise performance through core assessments and the provision work, including access to more reference works, greater use of ICT and attendance at sixth-form conferences.

LATIN

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- A level results in 2000 were above the national average.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- High expectations are a feature of the good teaching.
- Students respond with interest and enthusiasm.

Area for improvement

- More practise to support accurate recall of information in examinations.

384. Standards in Latin are good. Examination results have been good since 1998, building successfully on good grades at GCSE. There has been good improvement

since the last inspection. Numbers are small. No females take the A level course because they have not taken GCSE Latin at their previous schools.

385. The students have a good grasp of the language. They translate Ovid competently and have good understanding of how poetry can convey different meanings by changes in word order. They have good knowledge of the effects of scansion on the reading aloud of Latin poetry. They recognise well the importance of the epic poem and the influence of Homer on Roman authors and their audience. They understand the position that Pliny occupied in the Roman world and have a good appreciation of the moral questions he discusses; for example, in their study of one of his letters concerning the death of a Roman master, killed by his slaves.
386. The quality of teaching and learning is good because specialist knowledge is high. Lessons are well planned and expectations are good. The teaching is enthusiastic and the students are well challenged to think about their work. The small numbers mean that they receive frequent individual tuition and respond with good levels of interest and concentration. Frequent checks are made for understanding and the students are able to resolve translation or grammatical problems easily. They are confident in their approach to the subject as a result of good teaching. A good amount of work is set for further preparation and the students have developed appropriate levels of independent study as a result. Some have found useful Internet sites with translations and more information about the authors of the set texts.
387. Leadership and management are good. Following a recent change of leadership, plans are in hand to revise thoroughly the scheme of work and produce a new department handbook.

ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

388. The main focus in this inspection was on English literature, French and German. Courses in English language and literature and Italian were also sampled. Progress from GCSE has been good in the English language and literature course. The students did better than expected considering their GCSE results. In the two lessons observed, one good, one satisfactory, students gained a sound grasp of unfamiliar linguistic concepts and lively discussions during lessons helped them to develop the discerning analytical skills applied to language use observed in their essays. In the one very good Italian lesson, progress was very good because the very well-paced teaching encouraged a high level of student participation.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Results have been consistently well above the national average and improving for the last three years.
- Standards are good because students express a mature, independent viewpoint and read literary texts perceptively.
- Progress is good because there is good provision in the teaching to widen students' knowledge of literature.

Areas for improvement

- The planning of work to match the widening range of prior attainment on the AS course.
- The identification of key skills in schemes of work.

389. Results in A level English literature were well above the national average in 2000 and improved further in 2001. Students achieve well. The proportion of female students in English literature groups is greater than in other subjects and in all years from 1998–2000 they did better than in their other subjects. Male students too did relatively well in 1998 and 2000. There has been a rising trend in A level results since the last inspection and results are considerably higher than might be expected from their GCSE grades. The first AS level English literature results recorded this summer show a high proportion of A-B grades. Many students, even those with more modest results, have carried on with the study of literature to A2 level.

390. Standards seen during the inspection are well above those usually found nationally in Year 13. Many make good and often very good progress after GCSE because they are taught effectively how to analyse texts and have the confidence to apply these skills. A further factor is their willingness to work hard and persevere even when they find the work difficult. Most show very good recall of previous texts, an ability to make literary comparisons and excellent understanding of the importance of significant detail in making analytical judgements. More able students develop a personal viewpoint, expressed with confidence in well-organised essays. They have perceptive insights into a range of literary texts; some particularly good work, with very close analysis, was seen on Victorian poetry.

391. Many Year 12 students are still coming to terms with the increased challenge of AS level at a very early stage in the course. In particular, those with modest GCSE grades, who have been used to closely structured lessons, find the transition difficult to make. Teachers build on their very good knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses, but will have to consider how they can match work more precisely to this widening range of individual needs.

392. Students learn well as a result of good and sometimes very good teaching. They understand texts and literary techniques well because very good subject knowledge is a strength of the teaching. Exposition and explanation is frequently scholarly and always clear in the well-planned lessons. A further strength lies in skilful questioning, which provides frequent opportunities to respond to challenging open-ended questions. As a result, most develop independence of thought and a personal response to literature. Questions are often carefully targeted so that less able students are given confidence and the more able are appropriately challenged to respond in greater depth. Group discussion is well used to develop students' participation. Skilful

classroom management enables the salient features to be shared. As a result, progress is good.

393. Learning outside lessons is very well supported by the excellent library provision. Many use the Internet for research and some make good use of ICT for drafting and improving their essays. Not all students, however, are able to gain adequate access to ICT. Many in Year 13 have developed good independent learning skills, helped by the structured framework provided in Year 12. Many have improved their time management. Some continue to need to improve their note-taking skills. Marking is very thorough. Students value the detailed, individual comments.
394. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The range of courses has increased. Teaching methods are more varied and students participate more actively.
395. Leadership and management are good. Students' progress is well monitored. The quality of guidance is good. Completion rates are very good. Very good teamwork supports a very good deployment of expertise. The procedures for monitoring teaching are sound. Professional development, particularly to prepare for the introduction of new courses, is very good.

GERMAN

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The teaching inspires and challenges.
- Marking of work is thorough and diagnostic.
- The subject is well led.

Areas for improvement

- To set up work experience abroad.
- The proportion of higher grades.

396. Numbers are small at A level. This makes national comparisons unreliable. The proportion obtaining grades A-B is lower than in many other subjects. In 2001 achievement was in line with expectations based on earlier GCSE grades. A similar proportion obtained grades A-B in the AS examination in 2001. Their achievement was satisfactory.
397. Standards in work sampled were much higher than this. The majority in Year 13 speak German fluently and confidently. They convey their views and opinions effectively, using complex structures and a wide range of vocabulary. Learning for homework, private study and the regular pursuit of synonyms in lessons, all contribute to these standards. Most understand the gist of spoken or written German and select the relevant details required for answers. Written work is thoroughly researched and planned.
398. Students in Year 12 are only a little way into their course. They are already enjoying the challenge made by the different demands and the high standards of the AS course. They work well, both independently and in groups. They build on previously learnt grammar and acquire new vocabulary for topic-based modules. They reflect on the meanings and derivation of words. Good teaching methods emphasise the importance of fluency. In one lesson students were challenged to read a section at speed, with understanding. Everybody was made to feel part of the lesson, which resulted in good participation. Building from that, a slightly adapted text was cut into

strips. Groups of students worked collaboratively, referred to dictionaries where necessary and put the text into correct order.

399. The quality of teaching is good. Some excellent teaching results in high standards and progress over a relatively short time. High challenges are set and met. Lessons are delivered briskly, with clear objectives at the beginning and a check at the end to see what has been achieved. New skills are acquired and practised and grammar is taught in context. Marking is thorough, showing a breakdown of strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. Accuracy is emphasised. Student' files in both years contained helpful notes on complex grammar and tenses, with examples of consolidation work and detailed, written passages, using sophisticated styles, all very individual, which is evidence that students are thinking up their own ideas and researching topics. Good use is made of resources. Students are mature and very positive about their targets and the subject. They are involved in the choice of topics, with the result that they show added interest in their work. They enjoy discussions and can develop arguments well. Good research skills are being used and students are competent in using ICT. The rapport between teachers and students is excellent. Females new to the sixth form settle in quickly. The students seek help when required, which helps their progress significantly.

FRENCH

The quality of provision is **good**.

Strengths

- Staff expertise.
- Variety of methodology.

Areas for improvement

- To arrange work experience abroad.
- To further develop strategies to increase the proportion of students attaining the higher grades.

400. A relatively low number of students study the full course, although numbers are increasing. The proportion gaining grade A varies and is lower than in other subjects. High standards were seen in lessons observed and from the sampling of work. Year 13 students are well aware of the course demands. The start to the year has been slow, owing to staff absence and the change of teachers. The most able students, both male and female are able to speak French confidently and convey opinions and views effectively. A small minority have difficulty particularly with complex verb forms and their usage. Most are able to comprehend spoken and written French at this level and can select important details when answering. The quality of written work varies. The most able use complex structures and sophisticated language, whilst the least able give minimal answers and there is a higher degree of inaccuracy.
401. Students in year 12 are already working to a high standard. The transition from GCSE is difficult, but students new to the school are settling in well and are very positive in their attitude and approach to study. A moving video made the students think very hard about the moral of the story. The language used was complex, but it was evident from oral answers and the written tasks that students were able to understand and express themselves clearly in French. In another lesson, family values and problems were freely discussed in French. In group and pair work, the students were particularly confident.
402. Sixth form teaching is good and some very good teaching was seen. Expectations are high and students are involved in their target setting. Teachers are role models in the

use of French throughout lessons. As a result, students are confident in their speaking skills. Teachers plan a rich and varied range of tasks, so that students acquire and practise the language in context. Listening skills are difficult and teachers are looking at different techniques to make this skill more accessible, particularly at examination level.

403. Students show a mature approach and are attentive and interested in all aspects of their studies. They seek help when required and act on advice given. Good use is made of resources and the library resource area. Students are encouraged to use the Internet and do so competently.